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BEYOND THE BARRICADE:

Liberation Theology in The Development of Resistance in a Chilean *Población* to the Military Regime of Augusto Pinochet Between 1980 and 1986

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ABSTRACT

The general focus of the study is a shanty town (*población*) on the outskirts of Santiago in Chile during the military regime of Augusto Pinochet. The military coup of 11th September 1973 was the beginning of seventeen years of repression and violence. The specific focus of the research is the development of resistance against Pinochet amongst the people (*pobladores*) of that shanty town .

The research is based on a six year period in the *población* where the candidate, being also a Catholic priest, had unique access through his role to the social and cultural life of the people. The implications of this role in terms of retrospective anthropology are examined in detail. The experience is studied in terms of the developments of attitudes and behaviour within a particular group especially in their movement from tentative protest and the creative use of ambiguity, to the use of barricades as the focus for direct confrontation with the authorities. The passing beyond the barricade is explored in terms of the expansion of the people's capacity to develop political agency. The thesis is a case study of Liberation Theology and its role in the development of resistance to the military regime.

The street becomes a central focus as space of protest. A comparison is made between the private space of the house as refuge and the public space of the street as place of conflict and danger. It is suggested that the barricade may be understood as a dynamic boundary being partly constituted by the bodies of the protesters themselves. It is also didactic, insofar as the re-appropriation of physical space - the streets, the bridge upon which the key barricade is built, and by extension the entire *población*, parallel the occupation of the internal space in the minds of the protesters. The transformations of meaning being etched into the 'landscape' were being correspondingly etched into the 'inscapes' of the imagination.

If space can be taken as analogous to language and the movement of bodies through the *población* understood, therefore, as an articulation of an alternative discourse, then the boundary/barricade can be seen as the focus for such a counter-discourse against the attempt by Pinochet to militarise civilian life.

Liberation theology and the Basic Christian Community are explored in terms of the development of the potential of resistance to the military regime. It is suggested that these functioned by legitimating new public discourses, promoting new styles of leadership and empowering individuals and organisations. Here politics becomes part of the road to 'salvation' and religion becomes politics by other means.

Finally the question of popular education is addressed in the context of an invasion of the University by the *pobladores*. A project of popular education is explored in its attempt to go beyond the question of protest against the Regime to addressing how political power is operated through appropriation of discourse. Power and knowledge are intricately intertwined. The focus moves to consider political violence as being exercised not just in military might but also through institutional structures.

The conclusion recapitulates the main themes in the context of wider aspects of anthropology.

To the people of Lo Errazuriz

and

To Matias whose spirit lives in every page

O' Wonder!
How many goodly creatures are there here!
How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world,
That has such people in't.

The Tempest: Act 5, Scene 1,

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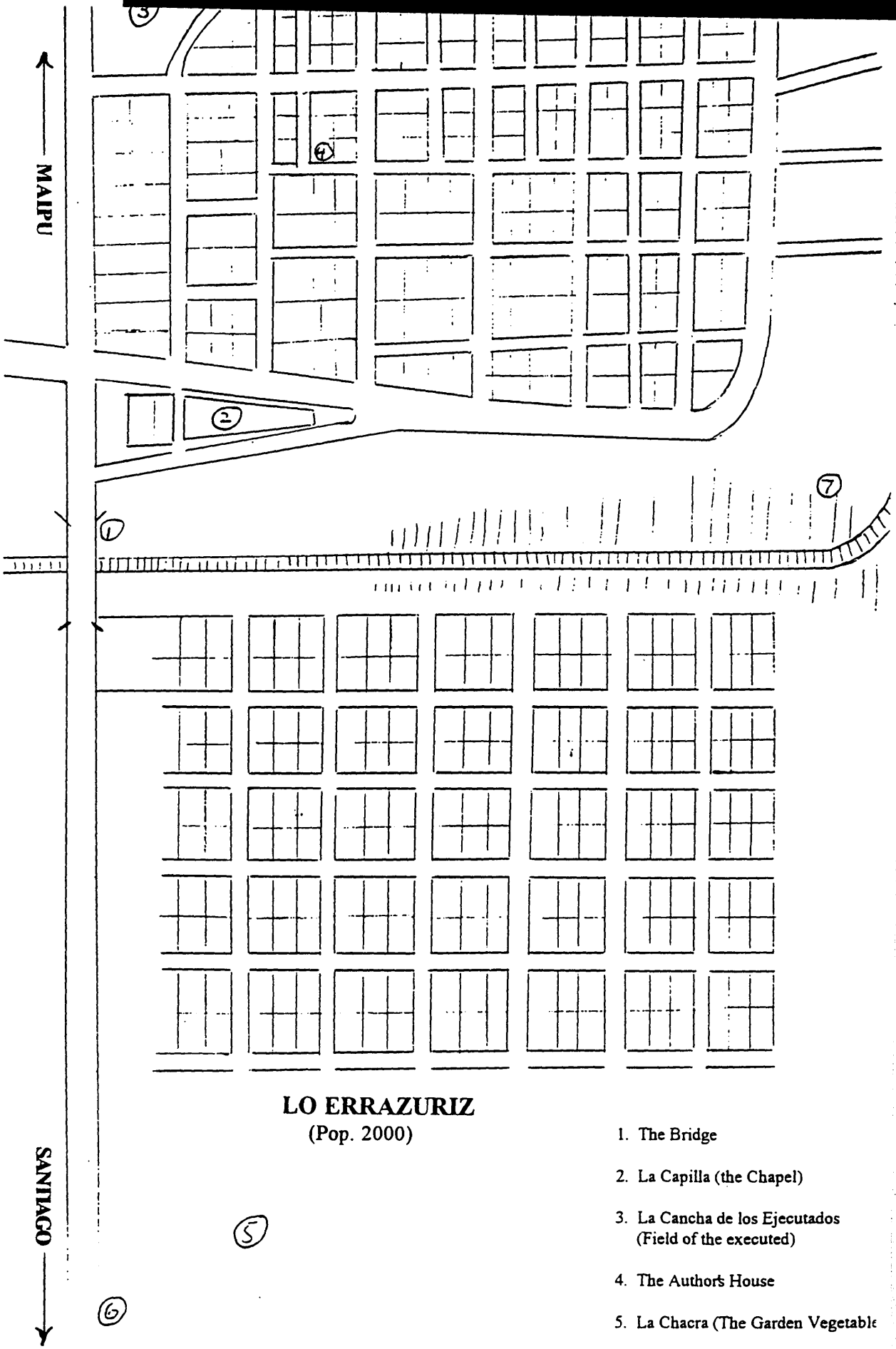
Preface and Acknowledgements

The events I narrate in this Thesis are presented as a series of essays, each a snapshot of a particular moment in the development of a group of people and written in the hope that their contribution to the struggle against the Military Government of Augusto Pinochet Ugarte might not go unregistered. The name of the shanty town is its actual name. I see no point in fictionalizing a place to which this author was so cleary connected. It would in any case take only a small effort to connect the two. Some of the names of the actors have been changed, others disguised, places and events differently situated to give, at least some privacy to individuals.

I present myself as a priest. I have subsequently resigned from that role and what I write is not intended as an apology for the Church but a recognition of the role that certain parts of it have played in the struggle for justice in Latin America.

I thank Prof. Anthony Cohen for his guidance, kindness and wisdom; Dr. Alan Campbell and Dr. Judith Okely for their encouragement; and Dr. Clive Foster for his advice, support, constructive criticism and for keeping his nerve when I was losing mine .



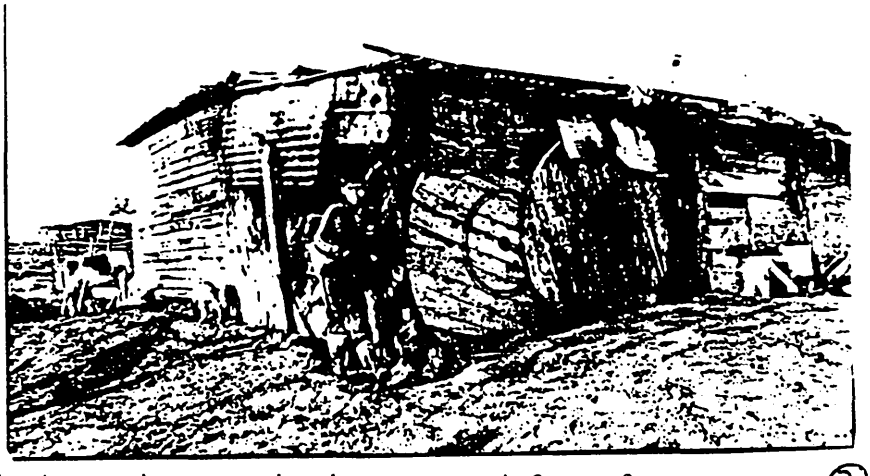
LO ERRAZURIZ

(Pop. 2000)

1. The Bridge
2. La Capilla (the Chapel)
3. La Cancha de los Ejecutados (Field of the executed)
4. The Authors House
5. La Chacra (The Garden Vegetable
6. The Pylon That was destroyed
7. The ambush of the police bus

LO ERRAZURIZ

① **Looking Down from one side of Lo Errazuriz to the other**



The *población* of Lo Errazuriz (pop. approx. 2000) is found on the outskirts of Santiago within the municipality of Maipú. It would be more accurate to say that it is actually two *poblaciones* divided by a railway line. (one side of which is more properly known as Los Presidentes). It wasfounded by a *toma*, a land seizure some twenty five years before my arrival. The original group of *pobladores* came mostly from other shanty towns in Santiago. As the *población* grew, however, others began to move in from as far away as Concepción and Temuco in the South of Chile. This created a mix between rural and urban cultures and. interestingly, a mix between people who shared many aspects of indigenous, Mapuche culture and totally urbanized Chileans.

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Lives of poverty

Lo Errazuriz measured approximately half a square mile. There were about 300 households, most of which would, on average, consist of 6-8 persons. Often the grandparents would live with a son or daughter and it would be usual for the grandmother to have the daily responsibility for the upbringing of the grandchildren. As the children grew to adulthood and had children of their own, they would build another 'temporary' dwelling within the sitio for the new family. Some of the older houses would be constructed in brick, although many would be unfinished. The family, working as *bricoleurs*, would slowly build a new dwelling over the years as scarce money became avaliable. The vast majority, however, were wooden constructions. Although not as big or as crowded as many of the *favelas* of Brazil there would be little difference in other aspects of the experience of poverty

INTRODUCTION

I

POINT OF DEPARTURE

There are no real beginnings. All objects, beings, occurrences, utterances, texts or narratives are linked at some level. Beginnings are about the convergence of phenomena from the perspective of those who seek to give direction, meaning, order, explanation, or maybe a myriad other motives. They sometimes set the scene, constitute a context, or are, perhaps, simply a point of departure. Beginnings often seem already closed; the seed of an ending inevitably sown. At othertimes they appear as a stepping out onto unfamiliar pathways branching out in every direction or, even more disturbing, onto a plain yet to be explored.

This thesis is about beginnings; about incipient movements so small that they could be lost amidst the larger movements of more powerful actors. It is about the slow stepping out of people onto the pathways of resistance to, of protest against, events that threatened to engulf their human dignity and deny them power to have a say in the direction of their lives. It is a particular version of larger events already well documented (see Schneider, 1995; Hechos, 1983; Rodríguez, 1983; Valenzuela, 1984; Arriagada, 1985; Valdés, 1995). I tell it from the perspective of life in a Shanty Town (I shall usually use the local term: *población*) called *Lo Errazuriz*, a poor *barrio* (district) in Chile where I lived from 1978 until 1986. This *población*, found on the periphery of Santiago, the Capital City, is the scene in which the story unfolds but its beginnings are elsewhere.

The events which I go on to describe took place between 1980 and 1986. Six years in which the weight of the past came to be challenged by imperatives of the future, for the antecedent, bearing down with tremendous and sometimes terrible authority, can never determine with certainty what will follow. The only inevitability is that the past and the future coincide in a present which is the result of the projects and plans, actions and decisions, thoughts and understandings of yesterday's vision and which is the starting point for tomorrow's. The central question is always: can we learn from history and

thus discover how to give it direction or are we condemned to merely repeat it?

Before I begin my particular narrative of those years, it is necessary to chronicle events which held so many in its thrall, some mesmerised by its awfulness, others by its possibilities of untrammelled power. That history is the backdrop to the drama which unfolds, it is a context in which events are connected and a kind of sense is made. It begins not at just an arbitrary point but with *el once*, the 11th of September, that decisive day.

THE MILITARY COUP

On the 11th September 1973, within a few short hours of the Chilean armed forces attack upon the presidential palace, President Salvador Allende lay dead. Whether killed by his own hands or that of his aggressors will probably never be known. What is certain is that this was to mark the beginning of a period of military rule in which the armed forces behaved 'like an occupation force in a foreign country' (MacEoin, 1975:1). The Congress was abolished and a military Junta took total control: General Augusto Pinochet Ugarte for the Army; General Gustavo Leigh Guzmán, for the Air Force; Admiral José Toribo Merino Castro, for the Navy; and General Cesar Mendoza Frank, for the Carabineros (the police). Martial law was proclaimed and General Pinochet was named as head of the ruling Junta.

There was little resistance against this imposition by massive military might. Despite the months of brave talk by political and union leaders, when the moment came, they saw little point in fighting. By late afternoon the armed forces were in complete control (Contstable and Valenzuela, 1991: 18-19) and a period of violent and cruel repression began. People of the *poblaciones* (I will use the local term: *pobladores*), even years later, would recount the stories of horror which occurred over the following months and years. Cathy Schneider tells of the recollections of one of her informants:

> The military surrounded the población. Day and night we heard shooting, and saw helicopters overhead with search lights. It was unbearable. We couldn't get out, we couldn't fight. Then people started to disappear. Some they killed right there. I remember them shooting a woman and her three children on the street (Schneider, 1995: 75).

The practice of scattering bodies throughout the *poblaciones* became a macabre means of exercising control over the minds of the people. Schneider reports one of her informants saying:

> Every day new bodies arrived, nude and headless. They floated in the river. We were stunned. It wasn't possible. We cried, please no more. They took my husband on the twelfth. A police patrol arrived. My youngest son was only thirteen years old. The wife of my older son was six months pregnant. She was disappeared. Her son still goes to sleep under the bed. In this way we learned that anything was possible (1995: 75).

The arbitrary arrests and detentions in hastily set up prison camps like the National Football Stadium in Santiago or the infamous Dawson Island in the South of Chile, or that centre of so much torture, the Villa Grimaldi and many others, became symbols of absolute power wielded by the country's new rulers, 'terror mapped onto urban spaces' (Scarpaci and Frazier, 1993:1-21). Everything and anything was permitted to them. The stories of torture and murder, the slow realisation that some of those arrested would simply just disappear, some to turn up dead, others never to turn up at all, began to emerge and to terrify. Years later my own friends in *Lo Errazuriz*, who had themselves been detained in the Stadium, still refused to even discuss their experience, so scarred were their memories by these events. This technique of control is effective. There is less need to police every part of the occupied territory if you can occupy the 'territory' of the mind with fear. This way each mind becomes its own 'policeman', each 'self' socially disciplined if privately resentful (Foucault, 1975: 304).

In June 1974 Pinochet introduced a secret police force known as the *Dirección Nacional de Inteligencia* (Directorate of National Intelligence) much better known by its acronym, the DINA. In less than a year this organisation, led by a personal friend of Pinochet, Manuel Contreras, was the main engine of fear and intimidation. As a team of Chilean psychologists noted: 'The rumours of people vanishing made the DINA seem omnipresent and omnipotent. "to disappear" evokes images of "magic intervention by mysterious forces". It suggests the inexplicable, the irrevocable, an absolute loss of knowledge' (Becker, 1989; Constable and Valenzuela, 1991: 94).

The DINA was soon to be implicated in the assassination, in Argentina, of General Pratts, a previous Chief of the Armed Forces, the attempted

assassination in Italy of Bernardo Leighton, and the assassination of Orlando Letelier in Washington. In 1977, and due to international pressure, the DINA was dissolved and replaced by a new secret police structure called the *Centro Nacional de Informaciones* (National Centre of Information) the CNI. It was headed by one Manuel Contreras.

In December 1977 the United Nations condemned Chile for its human rights abuses in a vote passed by 96-14. Pinochet's response was to call a referendum. On January 4th 1978, with the 'state of siege' still in force, with no voter registration and no critical press coverage allowed, the people were presented with a ballot paper with a Chilean flag for 'yes' and a black box for 'no' and the following statement:

> 'Faced with international aggression launched against our Fatherland, I support President Pinochet in his defense of the dignity of Chile and reaffirm the legitimacy of the government. . . '

The votes were counted inside the Ministry of the Interior. Blank votes counted as 'yes' (Constable and Valenzuela, 1991:67-68).

Pinochet's ploy was an overwhelming success in more ways than one. Not only did the military government have a new legitimacy but Pinochet himself was confirmed as its undisputed leader (Schneider, 1995: 98; Borzutsky, 1987:28). This also marked a change in his method of rule from mere imposition to one that was placed within a legal framework. The question of a new constitution now became a major goal for Pinochet culminating in his successful Constitutional Plebiscite of the 11th September 1980. On March 11th 1981 Pinochet was sworn in as President for eight long years. On the same day he took up residence in the now rebuilt Presidential Palace where Allende had died defending the previous constitution.

ALLENDE

On May the 11th 1970 it had all appeared so differently. It was on this date that Dr. Salvador Allende was elected President of The Republic of Chile. Head of a left wing coalition known as the *Unidad Popular* (UP) made up of 6 parties (see Falcoff, 1989:26-38).

Allende belonged to the Socialist Party - an indigenous, nationalist, radical social movement founded in 1932. The Party was divided between those who saw the way forward through peaceful and parliamentary means, and those who believed that only force could really change society. Allende belonged to the electoral wing. A large sector of the Party was made up of not just of industrial working class but professionals, small farmers, civil servants, merchants, teachers.

The second partner in the UP was the Communist Party of Chile, founded in 1912 by Luis Emilio Recabarren. This was a loyal pro-Soviet Union Party and notably one of the first to announce its endorsement of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. It was influential in the copper mining regions of the North and the Coal mining district of Lota in the Southern province of Concepción. It dominated the Chilean Trades Union Council: the *Central Unica de Trabajadores* (CUT).

The Radical Party was the representative of the "old" (pre-industrial) middle class. Founded in 19th Century as an offshoot of the Liberals, it became a focus for many of Chile's bureaucratic middle class . They delivered that vote which proved crucial to Allende's success. However, in 1972 they left the government and joined the opposition apparently in protest at the President's willingness to veto legislation to prevent the expropriation of enterprises without legislative approval.

Another important coalition partner was MAPU, *Movimiento de Accion Popular Unitaria* a break-away from the Christian Democrats. The Party was influenced by the model of a "communitarian" society, a compromise between capitalism and communism. When this kind of model began to fade in the Frei government the left of the Party began to use more Marxist categories, a reflection of the Marxist-Christian dialogue that was underway in Europe. There was a strong Catholic identity amongst this group which contributed to a search among Christians, both philosophically and theologically, opening up a dialogue about the possibility of co-operation between Christians and Marxists (MacEoin, 1975: 62). In the first year of the government of Unidad Popular MAPU dropped its "Christian" identity and became Marxist-Leninist. In this sense they failed to entice militants from the Christian Democrats who would not drop their Christian credentials.

The two smaller groups included in the UP were API, *Acción Popular Independiente*, basically a personalist political machine of Rafael Tarud. It had a base in the Arab Community in Chile and among some police and army officers as well as the provincial bourgeoisie. Tarud aspired to the presidency and to this end formed an alliance with the small PSD, *Partido Social Democratico*. When the other left parties made it clear that they would rather strike out without the support of these two parties they finally fell into line and supported Allende.

Allende with his UP coalition; was both the symbol of hope for many Chileans, especially the economically poor, and at the same time a frightening prospect for many of the elite. His election was especially seen as a threat by the United States of America deeply concerned with the fear of a 'domino effect'. Indeed a group of Italian sympathizers is reported to have told Allende:

> If you can show in Chile that a second road to socialism is possible, that it is possible to create a symbiosis of Christian *values* and socialist *institutions*, then the next country to advance along that road will be Italy, and very soon others in Latin America, and later, in one or two generations, half the world (Quoted in Tomic 1979: 211).

Allende's program of government was radical. One of its main objective was the abolition "of the power of foreign and national monopoly capital and of large units of agricultural property, in order to initiate the construction of socialism" (Zammit, 1973:255-284). This construction, for Allende, was what became known as 'the Chilean Road to Socialism'.

In his first presidential message given on the 21st May 1971, Salvador Allende laid out this concept saying: "Chile is today the first nation on earth called to fashion the second model of transition to socialism" (Troncoso, 1988: 134). The first model was understood as the one represented by the Russian Revolution. But for Allende the conditions in Russia in 1917 and Chile at the beginning of the 1970's were quite different. In a speech given the previous November in the National Stadium he explained that, for him, the coming to power of the 'popular forces' was to be understood in the context of the development over many years of mobilisations and political action which had engaged with the state. Actions which had influenced the making of laws and which had contributed to the healthy democracy of the nation. He went on to say:

> This civic peace is not the fortuitous consequence of chance. It is the result of our socio-economic structure, of a peculiar relationship of social forces which has been constructed in accordance with the reality of our development. . . this republican and democratic tradition came, in this way, to form part of our personality, impregnating the collective consciousness of Chileans. Respect towards the rest, tolerance of the other is one of the most significant cultural possessions with which we reckon. And, when within this institutional continuity and within fundamental political norms, antagonisms and contradictions between the classes emerge, they do so in an essentially political way. Our people have never broken this historical line (in Troncoso, 1988, 118, translation mine).

The way of insurrection, being outside this historical, structural context, was not an option for Allende. For him the modification of the actual Constitution with the objective of opening up a 'Popular Constitution' was the preferred way forward. The political struggle had at its heart the need to generate a consensus which was the only way to construct a social majority capable of supporting the project of social change.

The subtleties of Allende's version of the 'second road to socialism' were not appreciated by the Chilean elites or the USA when faced with the incontrovertible fact that his prospective government was a coalition which included the Chilean Communist Party, perhaps the most Moscow leaning Communist Party in Latin America. For them, something was happening that should have been impossible: the democratic election of a 'Marxist government', albeit one which did not have the majority of the people behind it. The Presidential election returns of 1970 were:

Candidates	**Popular Vote**	**%**
Jorge Allesandri (Independent, National)	1,036,279	35.2
Salvador Allende (Popular Unity - Socialist MAPU, Left-Radical)	1,075,616	36.6
Radomiro Tomic (Christian Democrat)	824,849	28.1

(In Falcoff, 1989:15)

According to Article 64 of the Old Chilean Constitution, if no presidential candidate won an outright majority then the two houses of congress, in joint session, had to choose by majority decision either the one with most votes or the runner up. The tradition, nevertheless, was invariably to elect the front runner. However, pressure was brought to bear upon the Christian Democrats to eschew this tradition and vote for Allessandri. However, this was not the whole of the plan known as the 'Alessandri Formula'. Here it was suggested that if elected, Alessandri would, in fact, resign. This would pave the way for fresh elections in which the previous President Eduardo Frei, a Christian Democrat, would then be free to stand. This was necessary because under the constitution, Frei, having been the previous President of the Republic, was unable to stand in the immediate, subsequent election. He was immensely popular and it was believed that he would win in a straight contest with Allende. However, in the end, the Christian Democrats voted according to precedent and Allende was chosen as the new president.

ROAD TO COLLISION

At his inauguration, together with the trappings of power, Allende also, unfortunately, inherited a foreign debt contracted by his predecessors amounting to $3 billion, one of the highest per capita debts in the world at that time (MacEoin, 1975: 92). He also inherited partners in his government who had different understandings of the UP 'Basic Programme'. In this there was no mention of 'transition to socialism'. What it did indicate was the kind of tasks that the government had to undertake in order to begin the 'construction of socialism': 'The fundamental task (. . .) is to put an end to the domination of imperialists, of monopolies, of the landowning oligarchy and begin the construction of Socialism in Chile' (Quoted in Troncoso, 1988:122).

The first year of the UP saw raising minimum wages and the expansion of services to the poor. The Copper Companies were nationalized, as were the banks, all of which served to finance Allende's social programme. As a result there was an increase in demand and production was stimulated. In April 1971 municipal elections were held and the UP increased its percentage of the vote from the 36.6% in the presidential elections to 51% (Schneider, 1995: 67).

As Schneider (p.67) points out, the left's gains at the polls had dramatic consequences. The left-wing, grassroots political activists saw them as a

green light for the transition to socialism while the right saw them, for the same reason, as a serious threat. The fate of the UP government was already being sealed. International credit was cut off by the USA leading quickly to shortages of supplies and rising prices. Both right and left attempted to by-pass the use of democratic means, with the right increasingly turning to acts of sabotage and subterfuge to undermine the government (Garreton, 1986: 186; Schneider, 1995: 68). The World Bank, which up to Allende's election had lent Chile $235 Million, now refused every application, even for those projects already begun under Frei. It even denied continuing funding for an ongoing electrification program which the Bank had been assisting for 20 years. Aid, however, was not withdrawn from one significant beneficiary: the armed forces. Under the United States Military Assistance Programme, the Chilean military, already a major recipient of aid, was to receive $6 million in 1971 and over $12 million in 1972. A similar amount was projected for 1973.

Valdés sums up the collision course now under way:

> Such was the atmosphere prevailing at this time when the organized workers and large marginal urban sectors began increasingly to participate in politics . . . The secular fear of the poor felt by the wealthier classes promoted the radicalization of trade associations and associations for employers. Having already mobilized during the previous period these associations now resorted to hoarding and even to terrorism, in order to foster confrontation and chaos and thus bring about the military intervention desired from the outset by some of their leaders (1995: 244).

With the continuing growth in wages and subsidies to state firms the economy went into recession with a rate of inflation in 1972 of 260.5 % and 605.1% in 1973. This was a period of economic collapse (ibid; p.249).

October of 1972 saw the *Paro de Octubre* (October strike) of the merchants and manufacturers, professionals and shopkeepers. It was the culmination of a year of planning by the economic elites aimed at bringing down the government of Allende, and was to be the most serious challenge which the UP government had to face. Despite the increasing revolutionary mood among many workers groups, Allende ended the strike by incorporating the military chiefs into the cabinet (Winn, 1986:235-9).

The hope for the opposition was that the parliamentary elections of March 1973 would produce the numbers necessary to impeach Allende. However, surprisingly, the UP won a massive 45.3% (Valdés, 1995: 250).The left-wing saw this as a triumph even though the end result was a majority opposing coalition between Christian Democrats and the National Party. Even with this majority they were unable to achieve the two-thirds majority necessary to impeach Allende. Nevertheless they had the votes needed in Congress to continue as an obstacle to the UP.

The military were now becoming increasingly politicized and critical voices were being raised. In June 1972 a rebellion by a Santiago armoured regiment took place led by Colonel Roberto Souper. Armoured vehicles surrounded the presidential palace and fired upon it. If the intention was to provide the impetus for a coup, the result was total failure. No high ranking military personnel adhered to the movement and, when General Prats, the Commander-in-Chief, took immediate personal command of four regiments, the plot collapsed. However, during these few hours of confusion Allende had called upon the workers to occupy their factories and, later that evening, a massive demonstration of support took place in front of the palace. Gary MacEion described it in these terms:

> Enormous crowds invaded Santiago from all directions, dressed for battle, few with guns, but most with pitchforks, machetes, wrenches and clubs. The proponents of physical force were jubilant. The day had demonstrated, they claimed, that real power was now with the workers and they should use it (1975: 161).

The situation was deteriorating and Allende searched desperately for a political solution and began a series of negotiations with the Christian Democrats. Meanwhile the Catholic Church also began to intervene, making a number of public declarations. On the 22nd July Cardinal Raúl Silva Henríquez called for:

> . . .a great national consensus to achieve peace and create the necessary social transformations . . . For this to occur it is necessary for each and every one to renounce the arrogance of wanting to convert their own social truth into divine truth (in Troncoso, 1988: 358).

July 26th saw the implementation, once again, of a strike by the owners of the transport infrastructure, together with an increase of terrorism involving

extreme right-wing groups like *Patria y Libertad,* (Fatherland and Freedom). There were also daily demonstrations in the streets by well dressed women and students banging pots and pans as a symbol of their opposition to the UP. In this atmosphere the dialogue with the Christian Democrats came to an end.

Inflation continued to increase which, together a serious shortage of food caused by the transport strike and the hoarding of goods in warehouses, began to raise the social and political temperature even higher. A campaign was begun to try to break the remaining links between the UP and the military by a press campaign against the Commander-in-Chief, General Prats. He was besieged in his home on a number of occasions by wives of military officers. Finally, on 24th August, in an attempt to prevent the army from splitting, he tendered his resignation. General Augusto Pinochet, next in line by seniority, became the new Commander-in-Chief.

AFTERMATH

In the immediate aftermath of the *golpe militar* the National Party gave their enthusiastic support to the new regime. A majority of the Christian Democrats did likewise, however, as the days and weeks moved on and the full horror of the violence being committed against the Chilean people became apparent, their support was withdrawn.

With the picture of murder and torture beginning to emerge, Cardinal Silva Henríquez, together with representatives of the Methodist, Lutheran and other Protestant churches as well as the Jewish Community, founded the *Comité de Cooperación para la Paz en Chile*, COPACHI (the Committee of Cooperation for Peace) aimed at responding to the abuse of human rights. When in November 1975 Pinochet insisted that this committee be dissolved, the Cardinal simply replaced it with the *Vicaría de Solidaridad* (the Vicariate of Solidarity). This continued the same work as before but was more formally included into the official Catholic Church structure, having the benefit to the bishops of being better controlled and the disadvantage for the government of being harder to control. An attack on the Vicaría was an attack on the Church (Smith, 1982: 238). The Church and the Christian Democrats had placed themselves firmly outside the military project.

Allende was not immediately replaced by an alternative President. After the coup the military Junta as a whole assumed executive power. Decree Law 128 of November 1973 stated that: 'the Governing Junta has assumed constituent, legislative and executive authority'. The new rulers were in fact divided about the purpose of their takeover; while some in the Junta believed that their duty was simply to 'restore democracy', others saw an opportunity to break with the past and create a completely new order socially, politically and economically (Arriagada, 1985:9). At first the military government appeared to lack a definitive project (Valdés, 1995:16). They spoke about the doctrine of National Security but this was a mere 'substitute for a political project or model'. In itself it was not a detailed plan that could clarify the relationship between the state and 'civil society' (Garreton, 1983: 101).

The initial statements from the new government about being in 'power only as long as circumstances so require', soon gave way to the 'Declaration of Principles of the Government in Chile'. In this they stated clearly that:

> The armed forces and the forces of order are not setting a fixed term for the conduct of their government because the task of moral, institutional, and material reconstruction of the country requires profound and prolonged action. In definitive terms, it is imperative to change the mentality of Chileans (quoted in Arriagada, 1985: 12).

Pinochet, began to extend his own powers with the promulgation of the *Estatuto de la Junta de Gobierno* (The Statute of the Governing Junta). While stating that the military Junta retained executive power it also stated that this power was assigned to the President of the Junta. This Presidency was no longer the prerogative of the ruling members (the initial suggestions seems to have been that the presidency would rotate between the heads of each of the forces) it was instead to go to 'the titular member who occupies the position of highest precedence in accordance with the rules established by Title IV'. The corollary to this was that the order of precedence could only be changed by the 'death, resignation' or 'total disability' causing the Commander-in-Chief of the Army to cease membership of the Junta. Pinochet had complete control, he did not have a fixed term of office and could not be dismissed by the other members (ibid; p.15). He was to be known as *Jefe Supremo de la Nación* (Supreme Chief of the Nation). Six months later this title was changed to that of President of the Republic.

For the next seven years the power of the military regime gave the appearance of being unassailable. The population was controlled by a brutal system of repression which allowed for no criticism and where opposing political activity was simply not tolerated. The economic measures implemented by the economists named 'los Chicago Boys', after their adherence to the economic theories of Milton Friedman at Chicago University, began to have a devastating effect on the poor sectors. This school of economy had been in development for many years before the events of 1973. As Valdés points out in his study of 'Pinochet's Economists' (1995), in late 1972 naval sources requested an economic program that could be implemented after a coup. "It is very easy to overthrow Allende. The important thing is what to do with the government; how to solve the economic problems" naval sources were quoted as saying (Quoted in Fontaine, 1988: 18; Valdés, p.252). This study was put together and passed on to the Navy. Fontaine described what happened in these terms:

> From then on, the Navy started to receive the program almost page by page as de Castro and Undurraga gave it the finishing touches. On September 11, 1973, the photocopying machines. . .worked non-stop to duplicate copies of this long document - known under the pet name of "El Ladrillo" [the brick]. Before midday on Wednesday, September 12, 1973, the General Officers of the Armed Forces who performed governmental duties had the Plan on their desks (1988: 19-20).

As Valdés put it, 'the timing of the Chicago Boys' first program with the bombing of "La Moneda" [the Presidential Palace] and the death of the last constitutional president of Chile had thus been perfect' (1995: 252).

The Chicago group, buttressed by rigid military control against any opposition, were able to apply shock measures to the Chilean economy. The economic model was characterized by a liberalized price system and market; an open regime on foreign trade and external financing operations; and reduced government involvement in the economy. In effect Chile became a laboratory for the implementation of a market model later applied in the USA , the United Kingdom and other countries in the following years. With strict control of the labour market as a means of controlling costs. The repression wrought by the military was seen as inevitable though unfortunate.

The high point of the military regime was reached in the period 1980-1981. The magazine *Qué Pasa* described it thus:

> These were years of sweet money. Expansion was not limited just to economic groups. In the same way as large conglomerates based their growth on credit, people turned to the banks and finance houses to satisfy their most expensive desires. With lower tariffs and a cheap dollar, cars ceased to be a luxury reserve for the few. Consumer electronics found their way into even the most humble of homes. American whisky replaced local *pisco* . . . and foreign holidays became fashionable among the wealthier sectors. The government itself propagated such triumphalism. On the 11th of September 1980, President Pinochet described his goals: "to create a million new jobs, build 900,000 homes, enable one Chilean in every seven to own a car, one in every five to watch his own television, and one in every seven to install a telephone (1993: 32).

However, an economic crisis in 1982 brought the whole project to the brink of collapse and shook the military government to its core. The GDP fell 15%, unemployment reach 30%, 456 companies declared bankruptcy. Sergio de Castro, the Minister of Economy freed the exchange rates and the value of the Chilean Peso collapsed by 50%. Two banks had to be liquidated and ten banks nationalized (Schneider, 1995: 154; Valdés, 1995: 28).

With this crisis the political temperature soared. The invincible might of the military government suddenly appeared vulnerable. On May 7 1983, the unions, replacing an initial strike call, called on the people to demonstrate their feelings against the government by turning off lights and banging empty pots and pans.

II

STASIS

Pinochet was in control of Chile when I arrived in 1978; he was still in control when I finally left in 1986. In October 1988 he lost the plebiscite for his continuance in office for eight more years (there was no other candidate, just the question yes or no) by 54% to 56% and in 1989 Patricio Aylwin of the Christian Democrats won the Presidential election.

The thesis which follows is a reflection upon an experience of life in a *población* during a crucial period of this conjuncture in the history of Chile. It

is, for all intents and purposes, a narrative about streets or, perhaps more accurately, about movements of people through them.

The story, however, begins not with movement at all but rather with a static image. It is that of a precariously built 'shanty town' dwelling prevented from disastrous collapse by a strategically placed pole and Don Domingo's fervent faith that *la Virgen* would never allow its collapse. Domingo's house has maintained its grip on my imagination since I first saw it on the first day of my arrival in Chile and it could, I suppose, be made to symbolize a good many aspects of life at that time and in that place. For me it speaks of the people of the *poblaciones*, poor, uncertain, but not cowed or beaten. In a climate of oppression and fear adding to the equally oppressive, daily uncertainties of employment, nutrition, health, there was a withdrawing into a silence, into that much vaunted Chilean ideal; "*yo no me meto en nada*" (I don't get involved in anything),and "*vivo tranquilo*" (I live quietly). I would not follow Oscar Lewis (1966) into accepting that there is such a thing as a 'culture of poverty' but I would say that people living in the *poblaciones* did develop means of survival; knowledge and experience was handed on enabling people to be agents of their lives and not just victims. Knowing when to be silent is a strategy of survival. As the people would say: "*No hay mal que dura cien anos*" (No evil lasts forever). Waiting is not the equivalent of doing nothing, it is the practice of outlasting the enemy.

However, perhaps the static imagery invested in Domingo's house is not so much to do with the lack of movement on his part, than the fact that it is I who am unable to move on, at least not without first resolving fundamental obstacles. I cannot even tell of these events without first solving the problems raised by my manner of 'being there' in the first place. This is an initial challenge which I hope will not distract the reader too much from the more important story, but is one, for reasons that I will go on to explain in Chapter one, which it is necessary to face. This is a crucial exercise if we recognize, as Hastrup reminds us, that the anthropologist is not just a *writer* of ethnography but also its *author* (1992:116). This is especially so if the narrative is to be convincing as ethnography (ibid;).

ACTION

It is in the procession (chapter two) that the movements through the streets of *población* finally get under way. In the procession to the field of the executed

we find the first tentative steps by people to recapture their capacity to impose their own meanings upon the space they inhabit, meanings in contradiction to those imposed by the government. We see movement in another guise, that of ambiguity. Here an oscillation takes place between two domains, the religious and the political, and where, in Kracauers words:

> Previously hard boundaries were drawn, there now emerge crossings, here one thing flows into another. Not for nothing is 'nuance' a catchword of the time. Everything shimmers, everything flows, everything is ambiguous, everything converges in shifting form (quoted in Levine, 1985: 133; Frisby, 1981:98).

Here it is possible to see what you want to see, avoid seeing what is inconvenient. Here you can counter your accusers by sowing the doubt that what they thought they saw perhaps, after all, they had not.

And there is another movement. This one even less visible for it took place in the mind. A piece of land with death impressed upon it becomes transformed in the imagination and signals the possibility of a kind of victory, a precursor, a possibility, a hope.

In chapter three the ambiguity ends. Fear and hope can live together for an eternity, fear and anger cannot. The tension mounts as the fateful moment arrives. The first, overt, mass political action of protest against the military government is about to occur. There is a tension between the house, symbol of sanctuary, and the street which brings threat and danger. In a second the decision is made and a group of people step out with a cacophony of banging of pots and pans. Marching through the streets they transform the silence of sullen acceptance into the sound of protest and rejection. Most only watch, for now, but the threshold between the house to the street has been crossed and there will be no going back.

A second protest is called and again there is a march only this time it is much bigger. It divides and both columns weave their way through streets protesting, beckoning, strengthening and being strengthened in turn as people leave their homes to join in. Defiance and carnival come together as the separate columns reunite. In the flush of excitement a barricade is built on the bridge and in its flames rebellion is born.

Thus, on 11th May 1983 the cycle of protests began that were to last until 1986. Escalation towards confrontation was a major theme of the grass-roots activists and, in Lo Errazuriz at least, the bridge became the central focus. Here the barricade was built and here much of the action took place; but the mood changed. The carnival slowly gave way to 'blacker arts' of popular, urban warfare. In chapter four I explore this barricade, the division of space between two sides. This clear marking out was not so much about the identities of opposing sides but rather the points in space where a stand was taken. The barricade was a kind of rehearsal for a wider liberation not just a delineation of a liberated *población* but the staging post for a liberated nation. Indeed in a subsequent protest the barricade is transgressed by its own defenders who enter deep into 'enemy' space as an example of growing confidence if not actual might. The expansion of dominated space was, in large measure, an expression of the expanding minds of the protesters themselves. The growth in confidence became reflected in the control of space, the growing sense of purpose reflected in the organisation, planning creativity and daring that went into the techniques of protest. The liberation of the streets of *población* became a metaphor for a liberation, as it were, of the 'streets of the mind'. Pinochet would eventually regain control of the former, he would never regain control of the latter.

LIBERATION IN CONTEXT

The protests were about power and the testing out of political will. However, it would be a mistake to see them as the only challenge to the hegemony of military rule. Indeed, it is unlikely that the protests would have occurred when they did without the work that had been progressing in the *poblaciones* during the previous years. The eventual fall of Pinochet owed as much to the slower, less dramatic work being carried out at the level of grass-roots organisation. It was here in the daily social activities of solidarity amongst the people that the real seed of social and political change lay.

In chapters five, six and seven I look at the interplay, at least in the *población* which is the focus of my immediate concerns, of three important themes that contributed to a growing strength of purpose. The first is that of liberation theology. Religion, which can never be free from political implications, becomes, in the theology of liberation, political in a dynamic way. The starting point for this theology is in the concrete experience of oppression, of injustice of poverty, dependency and marginalization which it attempts to address in

concrete and explicit terms. It is a theology of contradiction 'whereby oppressed and oppressor, living in opposed economic and cultural worlds, profess belief in the same God' (McGillicuddy, 1988:41). The procession through the *población* to the field of the executed is called to mind with its dual and intermeshed play of religious and political imagery. The theology of liberation played a crucial role in the production of an alternative discourse which criticised the 'social (dis)order and encouraged the building of a new social formation, where the poor are agents' (ibid; p. 47). Perhaps overly optimistic in many ways, liberation theology, nevertheless played a crucial role in developing a critical mentality amongst the *pobladores* of Chile during this period and indeed, in the early years, was *the* major political discourse of opposition.

The emphasis of the theology of liberation upon praxis found its immediate expression in the *Comunidad Eclesial de Base*, CEB (Basic Ecclesial Community). In chapter six I examine the functioning of the Community in Lo Errazuriz, how it became the base of mutual social support and the space for reflection and organisation. Unlike the established Church structure, the CEB recognized the status of people as subjects, thus agency is promoted and a sense of taking control of a monolithic institution, at least at a local level. The didactic effect of this approach to building 'community' had enormous implications for the resistance to the ideology and practices which the military were trying to impose. The critical discourse of the theology expressed and organised within the concept of the CEB became a model for resistance to alienating ideas and an alternative experiment in social cooperation. It was, in short, an empowering experience.

Religion, however, was not the only player in the production of an alternative discourse. The political parties, although disarticulated by the violence of military oppression, never entirely lost their cohesiveness during the darker years. Using the limited space available, even if this meant using that created by the Church, there was a slow regrouping, a gradual reorganising and an eventual re-engagement with the activities of developing an opposition to the military regime. In chapter seven I describe a project of popular education employed by one particular political group, not the largest player on the political scene, but one with a developed concept of the relationship between power and knowledge, where the process of 'conscientisation' was associated with the problem of organisation. In the midst of this process the

action, once again, moves to the street just at the moment before an invasion of the University precincts. The theme of the streets as access to power develops as they now become the means of access to 'universal' knowledge made private within the walls of the institution. A liberation is being enacted, again by ordinary people, now far distant from the scene of their previous struggle. They are no longer fighting for domination of their own 'territory'. The struggle has been brought to the doors of the elites, the contradictions are exposed, the question of access to, and creation of, knowledge in the equations of power brought to centre stage. As Foucault said:

> In every society the production of discourse is controlled, organised, redistributed, by a certain number of procedures whose role is to ward off its powers and dangers, to gain mastery over its chance events, to evade its materiality (Quoted in Young, 1981: 48-49).

The challenge of the *pobladores* was in precisely inserting themselves into one of the nerve centres of the production and control of discourse. This one event was to dominate the national political picture for some weeks even if ultimately things returned 'to normal'.

In political terms the distance from Don Domingo's house, awaiting whatever fate or *la Virgen* might decree, lies a 'million miles' from the actions that occurred in the university that day. The passive reliance upon a prop to uphold the house is 'light years' from the movements through the streets that gathered up the people (and Don Domingo himself) and led them to the barricades and beyond. And yet the seed was already there in the beginning. Don Domingo's capacity to suffer was well rehearsed. Come earthquake, come Pinochet, he knew one thing: his survival could not depend upon himself.

This thesis is a case study of Liberation Theology and its role in the development of resistance to the military regime. It is an anthropology of a situation in motion, of changing contexts, of actors in development, of the coming together of beings fractured, distanced by violent events. These movements are not surprising for, as Fernandez points out:

> Ours is an organism which is going somewhere or returning from somewhere. It has. . . a sense of potentiality of the space it or others might fill and the capacity to fill it. Our organism may flutter for a while, meditate, and be quiescent, but sooner or later it must get moving again (Fernandez, 1986: 96).

What follows is an ethnography of a group of people living on 'history's underside' as they decide that they 'must get moving again'. It is an ethnography of their protest, their refusal to submit, of their desire to repair what was broken, to recapture what had been lost. It is a study of the use of space, of religion, of language, of symbol, of metaphor. It is an anthropology of 'webs of significance' in the moments of their being spun (Geertz, 1975:5). Indeed, as the processions and marches wound their way through the streets of the *población* this metaphor of 'spinning a web' becomes crucial in the attempt to understand their significance. The symbols and metaphors both of religion and of war were put to work and 're-woven' into new 'textures', the 'weaving together' creating new 'con-texts', where new questions could arise, new practices begin. A burgeoning 'consciousness' of self worth was expressed in collective endeavours even though they implied the possibility of the self's annihilation. To put it more simply, bravery and protest each produced the other. Where then does one begin? Well, there are no real beginnings.

CHAPTER ONE

IN RETROSPECT

DON DOMINGO'S HOUSE

Don Domingo's house was a wonder to behold, even by the standards of the shanty towns found on the peripheries of Santiago, Chile. Like many shanty town dwellings it was a wooden construction built with tongue and groove planks held together by cross pieces to make four panels that are then erected as four walls. The roof was made of pressed cardboard impregnated with tar which, in ordinary circumstances, could be more or less guaranteed to keep out the winter rains for two years at the most, although they would often be expected to give many more years of service. There were no glass windows, merely two wooden shutters on each wall.

The interior of the house had an earth floor, dry in the warm months of summer, damp in the wet season. There was a small living room where Don Domingo's family would gather for meals around a large table which took up most of the space. The seating arrangements for the room consisted of two straight-backed chairs and three, home made benches. The only other piece of furniture in the room was a sideboard. The rest of the house consisted of a small kitchen with a double burner Calor gas stove, although most of the cooking was done outside over an open fire, and one other room which served as bedroom for the whole family of two adults and six children. The toilet was a small outhouse with a wooden box with a hole over a pit known as a *pozo negro* (a black well).

This description would fit many of the dwellings in the twenty-five year old *población*. What made Don Domingo's house exceptional was the fact that it leaned permanently at angle of forty five degrees and was only saved from a certain and disastrous collapse by an external, strategically placed pole which simply propped up the house. To my certain knowledge it had been like this for at least twelve years.

The house, which occupied a corner of the street where I lived, (a street mysteriously named Dante by some faceless bureaucrat with either literary sophistication or macabre sense of humour) has always been the dominant

image in my mind whenever I think about life in the shanty towns of Latin America. If someone ever had the imagination to build a monument to the poor of the world instead of to the rich and powerful, I would offer Don Domingo's house as the model; a monument to survival.

The house perfectly encapsulates the precariousness of the existence of so many lives in the shanty towns all over the world. The uncertainty of never being able to make long term plans, of not having the security of reliable employment, of constantly striving to find adequate resources to feed the family, of not being able to afford medication, of trying to keep the house warm in winter, dry in the wet season, finding room in the same four walls for the extra child, room for the children's children, adequate clothing, shoes that work, all contribute to a permanent state of insecurity; each day a struggle simply to survive (Lloyd, 1979; Perlman, 1986). Life in these circumstances often becomes one of searching for the right 'prop' that might just hold up the edifice of existence for one more day, a week, a month or, with luck, possibly a year or two.

In 1984 Don Domingo's house, against all odds and predictions, survived an earthquake while in other parts of the city people were killed as more sophisticated buildings collapsed. When I asked him why his house, the one in the whole of Santiago most expected to fall, had in fact survived, he simply replied: "The Virgin always takes care of us".

VOICES FROM BELOW

That Don Domingo should be present at the start of this work is both an indulgence on my part and an imperative of justice.

It is an indulgence because this work is only partly mine. I write it, I reflect and analyze within it, I try to make meaning, I present and make use of the meaning that others have made. I choose 'this' and leave aside 'that ', and , like Campbell, end up with a handful of images which I registered by accident in some casual moment' (1989:21) and which help or hinder my attempt to write a kind of history. In this way it becomes a fable in which I seek the reader's agreement (for, as Voltaire said, what else is history?).

It is an act of justice because this work is constructed upon the shoulders of Don Domingo (and the others I have obliged him to represent by my sleight of

hand, by my play of symbol). It is they who struggled in flesh and blood (no metaphor here), who railed against their poverty, who organised resistance, who raised their voices and clattered their pots and pans. It is they who faced fear, and, even when they flinched, returned to face it again. It is they who had the courage to struggle for victory and the fortitude to accept defeat. It is they who sometimes ran away, even not to return another day. It is they who took a prop and re-made it, no longer as myth, but rather, as solidarity.

What follows in this thesis is my attempt to struggle with and understand the transformation of Domingo and others in the Chilean *población* of *Lo Errazuriz* during the military rule of Augusto Pinochet. It is not intended to be a description, certain and inevitable, which confuses a version with truth. What I write is a selective account, as much a description of my personal encounter with Domingo and his friends (my friends) as a detailed exposé of historical 'facts' (Okely, 1996:27). In this sense it is more my story than theirs, though I would hope they might recognize themselves through the mist of my words.

Maybe another participant would tell the story another way, and populate it with other actors. That is not the important thing. What matters is that Don Domingo, seen or unseen, recognised or ignored, travelled on a journey with others in which he, they (we), began to grow into active agents in the construction of other, possible, futures. Here he is visible, in other versions perhaps he would be as invisible as if he had never existed. Here the people of the *población* are the heroes, elsewhere, perhaps, the 'big man' would play that role (or the political parties, or the would-be-presidents, or the priests). I take no responsibility for other versions, only mine. I try to view, from within and below, in such a way that I can add my voice to those not represented in the circles of power (Okely, 1983: 232). Of course, my writing, like all writings, is a potential instrument of 'othering', of using the 'other' as a tool for reflection, a means to a more 'self-ish' end. That risk should be negotiated with care, but taken nevertheless, if we are ever to articulate the point of view from the bottom up (Cohen, 1987:39).

The danger, of course, is to believe that we can speak for others. Ultimately this is only another way of disarticulating the voice of our hosts and constructing ourselves as power brokers. As the Comaroffs said, 'If we take our task to be an exercise in intersubjective translation, in speaking for others and their point of view, our hubris will cause us no end of difficulties, moral

and philosophical' (1992:12). The question is rather how to join our voices with the people who have been our friends in a way that discloses not only our thoughts, our reflections, our analysis, but also what we have learned from them.

In this way we might just combat the notion perpetuated by the history of the 'big man' that 'he' is the only real genesis and locus of power. A history of the 'insignificant others', especially if we can walk the tightrope of not speaking for them, presents the possibility of a subversive history, one 'written against the hegemony of high bourgeoisies, the power of parliaments, and the might of monarchs' (Comaroff and Comaroff, 1992:14), not to mention military dictators. Can the 'small' voices find echo in our texts? Derrida (1978:34f) criticised Foucault's (1967) attempt to write a history of insanity on the grounds that the only way that this can be achieved is in the language of the very Western reason that constituted it in the first place. If he is right then I am doomed in my attempt and I can say nothing about the oppression and injustice of Chile during those years. My text, far from disclosing the voice of the oppressed, would serve only to subjugate further.

KNOWING AND BEING KNOWN

For almost eight years, from 1978 until 1986, I lived in Chile, most of that time in the *población* of *Lo Errazuriz* on the outskirts of Santiago. My problem, at least in terms of this thesis, is that it was never my intention to be there as an anthropologist. My particular role in the events that I go on to describe was rather different.

In 1978, after eight years of study and training for the Church Ministry, and after a few months in a vibrant, multi-ethnic London parish, I was appointed by the Religious Society to which I belonged, to work in the poor areas of Santiago de Chile. I was to join a group of 'missionaries' who worked in a very distinctive way. The approach in Chile was considered (not always sympathetically) to be more 'experimental' involving a greater political dimension than would be usual, and working in a more non-parochial (or non-mission station) model than had hitherto been attempted by members of the Society in other parts of the world. There had been a small number working in Santiago during the time of Allende, most of whom had to leave after the military takeover because of their previous political involvement. As the

number of appointees from the Society was slowly being raised I volunteered for this 'mission' and my offer was accepted .

I suppose being a politically motivated student activist and Student Union Representative (or trouble maker as some would have it) this kind of appointment was tailor made for me. Socialist both in upbringing and conviction, the political dimension was attractive. Unfortunately the pre-Thatcher, unreconstructed socialism, of the 1970's was perhaps too romantically optimistic for the experience of repression for which I set forth. My process of reconstruction was to be both necessary and painful.

The first thing, of course, was to learn Spanish. However, given the high speed with which Chileans are apt move through an average spoken sentence, not to mention their love of idiomatic expressions, Chile, paradoxically, is not the place most recommended for learning this language. After a brief sojourn in Santiago I turned to Cochabamba, Bolivia, where they speak slow, beautiful and, above all, grammatically correct Spanish. Three months later, armed with the rudiments of Spanish, I returned to the *población* which is the context of my concerns and where I was to spend most of the following years until 1986.

From my arrival in that place I lived alone in a house not dissimilar to many of the houses, although better than most (it had originally been constructed some years previously for a group of nuns). However, my role as priest was not that of a stereotypical kind. This was a different time with new and exciting models of Church and a theology which was attempting to find a voice, a means of responding to the military governments of Latin America and the seemingly relentless exploitation and degradation of millions of people.

My work was within a model of Church based upon the Theology of Liberation and the ideas of Basic Ecclesial Communities (themes which will be explored in subsequent chapters although it should be noted that I am not writing *about* liberation theology but rather presenting a case study of it in action). In practical terms my daily life was one of immersion in the ordinary routines of the *población*. This participation, however, was made sometimes easier, at other times more complex by the fact that I was not just any outsider but rather one with a role to which most people could immediately relate. The fact that it took me years to learn this role and to engage through

it in a creative way is another matter entirely, but it was no small feat on behalf of the people of that community that they suffered, with such fortitude, patience and kindness, my blundering attempts to come to terms with my apprenticeship.

Apart from the obvious need to learn the language and customs, I also had to carry the weight of the expectations that the people already had of me as priest. Some of these I found oppressive insofar as they often seemed to require me to replicate the norms of a kind of religion which in my opinion, tended to dominate and subjugate the human spirit rather than be a vehicle for its liberation. But even here I had to be careful. A Chilean friend was fond of telling me, not always kindly, that 'God gave us two ears and one mouth so that we might listen twice as much as we speak'. It was astute advice to give any *gringo* visitor. A reminder that it was more important that the people should bend my will, shape my understanding, before I should leap to judgement or use the powerful cultural role that I carried to impose a 'spiritual imperialism'.

I did not always take the advice offered by my friend, especially during the early years. To learn other meanings, other rhythms, other patterns is a long process (Okely, 1992: 17). It is much easier to be tempted to rely upon what one already knows, not to question the relevance of cultural concepts transported across the oceans. This temptation is even more relevant when, as I was, one is expected to represent a 'universal religion'. As Schreiter has pointed out in his seminal work on contextual theology, "we know that what had often been called the Christianization of a people was in fact a Westernization, depriving them of their own past' (1985: 75-76).

The process of personal transformation, of beginning to see things from other cultural perspectives is not possible without a painful revision of one's original concepts and understandings. I was once challenged by an, obviously bored, interlocutor, who asked why, when someone was explaining aspects of Chilean culture to me, I always responded by explaining the difference with my own. Although, at first, taken aback by this implied criticism, I concluded on reflection that I was in fact simply verbalising my internal process. I was understanding the new not just in terms of the old, as adaptation or translation, but rather as a comparison. It was a savouring of the difference rather than an attempt to amalgamate or place things in a cultural hierarchy. Perhaps this brings into relief, as Cohen remarks (1994:137) that 'individuals

and cultures can only be approached from the perspective of another culture or individual'.

The process of comparison brings with it an interesting corollary. To compare what appears similar between cultures, and seek for points of reference with the unfamiliar, brings about an inevitable interrogation of one's own culture in a way that challenges its normal taken-for-grantedness. Of course the points of reference upon which we choose to focus are in themselves an exercise of filtering, for 'we cannot have sight or knowledge of another individual/culture/ethnic group which is unmediated by ourselves' (Cohen, 1994:137; Boon, 1982:25). Nevertheless, whether or not we are aware of our own inner processes has important implications for the way we comprehend others. For in attempting 'to understand other people's complexities, we are brought face to face with our own' (Cohen, 1992a: 223).

This awareness of my personal processes had important consequences, not just for the observation and understanding of my host culture, but upon the way I was to respond to the cultural demands the people were making of me. To observe myself in the very act of cultural imperialism was disquieting. While in daily social life I was learning new skills, and discovering that I enjoyed learning them, in religious (theological) terms, my words and actions were, unfortunately, initially more rigid, non-reflexive, less willing to be transformed (eight years of theological and ecclesiastical formation are not given up too easily).

And yet to be so totally absorbed as to be indistinguishable within a culture is, perhaps, a naive wish, not to mention one which ignores the benefits which the contradictions of cross-cultural encounter can bring to both parties. It is quite possible that the frustration of my interlocutor was in fact a mirror image of my own attempts to make sense of one thing in terms, even if only by comparison, of another. It is quite possible that my failure to fully integrate caused him considerable frustration. To have to explain to someone else aspects of one's own culture which had hitherto been taken for granted is perhaps to question it differently, maybe for the first time. Hastrup in her discussion on fieldwork suggests that 'the condition of fieldwork is fundamentally confrontational and only superficially observational; self and other are inextricably involved in a dialectical process' (Hastrup, 1992:117; see also Fabian, 1985: 20).

The point is, as Hammersley and Atkinson, referring to ethnographic research, point out, 'rather than engaging in futile attempts to eliminate the effects of the researcher, we should set about understanding them' (Hammersley, 1983: 17). My participation involved an engagement of ideas. If at first I privileged the imperatives of learning I eventually had to allow myself to become involved in a more creative mode. My own making sense was helped by my engagement in the very process of sense making in which the people themselves were engaged. The climate in which we lived demanded the emergence of new responses to the concrete problems that threatened to overwhelm.

To engage in this way is a different kind of observation. It is to observe not just as onlooker but as co-creator. The act of observation thus becomes, in large measure, a self-reflexive one; the struggle to understand what was happening being as much to do with my actions as those of the people. That is why what follows must be partly autobiographical because the events I narrate involve my own self in a 'total experience, demanding. . . intellectual, physical, emotional, political and intuitive' resources (Okely, 1992: 8). In this sense, rather than removing myself from the description and analysis of the events, I need to be 'up front' and place myself firmly (not necessarily centrally, for I rarely was) in the midst of what was occurring. If the 'I' of the autobiographical mode is absent from much of my subsequent text it is not to obscure my presence but to place me appropriately in the context. That I was present is not to infer that I was important.

I was *el gringo*, the outsider, the foreigner never to be fully integrated although somehow absorbed. I knew after a few years that I had finally become a part of this small place when the dogs stopped treating me as an invader and the fleas decided no longer to set up home on my person. This happened, I was solemnly informed, because my blood had become more Chilean and so the dogs and the fleas had become bored. Someone else suggested that it was because I was drinking the local wine in sufficient quantities to completely confuse the poor creatures who could no longer discern my odours and flavours from those of anyone else. The *gringo* feast had come to an end and my integration was as complete as it was going to be, at least if the dogs and fleas were to be believed.

For me to enter the lives of the people in this manner was both an intrusion and a privilege. It was an intrusion because I was expected, too soon, to speak about things I barely understood and, as a result, made so many mistakes that even years later I still feel embarrassment and shame. It was a privilege because, as the priest, I was included, almost from day one, in some of the most intimate moments of people's lives. Through my role as 'master of ritual' I was involved in the new lives through the rites of baptism, the weddings both as ceremony and feast, and the darker sides of sickness and death. I was sought out in the middle of the night, even during the times of imposed curfew, to comfort the dying and to accompany the bereaved, because this is what *el padre*, *el cura*, the priest was for. At first I did this with many words, often the wrong ones, the *gringo* words. The people taught me, politely but firmly, the right words to say, and, just as important, when to shut up and say nothing.

Slowly, with the development of 'mutual trust and. . . affection' (Wax, 1971:373), the more profound aspects of an encounter begin to produce a deeper knowledge, a more subtle 'knowing' of the other as well as a 'being known' in return. As Hastrup comments, 'It is this interpersonal, cross-cultural encounter that produces ethnography' (Hastrup, 1992: 118; Clifford, 1982: 144).

As time moved on and Liberation Theology began to take a firmer hold upon the religious mind, the Church Community became a centre for social development, a centre for medical treatment, for health education, for child development, a food co-operative and other initiatives. Often, my role would be that of arbiter of disputes, a guarantor of honest practice in a climate of suspicion, a voice of authority. In practice I took the road of persuasion, the exercise of an authoritative voice being a double edged sword guaranteed to win enemies and friends in equal numbers. In any case, I was concerned to rid both myself and the people of the notion of the power ridden role of the priest and the imperialist mode of the missionary who too often are 'gripped by a drive to draw into their obsessions as many other souls as possible. . . and think it some kind of achievement to gain control of their minds, hearts and spirits, and their souls too' (Campbell, 1995: 59).

To go to the centre of *población* life so quickly was, of course, a minefield, where every step presented a distinct possibility of some event blowing up in

my face. My own problem was not simply one of participation in order the better to understand, the pressure on me was to perform. The intrusion of my questioning was about discovering how to perform my duties in the correct and appropriate manner without making a complete fool of myself in the process. I thought that I had understood so many things about how to behave only often to discover that I had completely missed the point. It became an urgent matter of personal 'survival' to try to grasp the way things worked, to enter the symbolic world, to grasp the levels of meaning implied not just in the action and the word, but in the silence, the stare, the being there and the absenting. In the early days I even had to learn the importance of not speaking too loudly. Gringo's and loud voices were synonymous in the Chilean mind; being *prepotente* (arrogant) was considered a major fault. Learning by observation, by listening, by questioning, by imitation and by cajoling people into correcting my mistakes, became a necessary habit. I was not like a child learning that culture for I was 'already shaped and formed by history. . . [I had] to change or superimpose new experience upon past embodied knowledge, and come to terms with a changing self embodied in new contexts' (Okely, 1992: 16). The process was a hard school.

MISSIONARIES AND ANTHROPOLOGISTS

If in the first months my desire to become immersed in the social and cultural reality of the people owed more to the needs of personal survival than anything else, as the months moved on and my engagement with that reality became more confident, I realised that I lacked the tools for a more sophisticated (or perhaps satisfactory) explanation of many aspects of *población* life.

One area in particular attracted my attention. I could never fully understand how people actually managed to survive the poverty in which they were forced to exist. With full time employment virtually non-existent, people were obliged to create a variety of strategies to survive a day to day existence. The precariousness, so symbolized by Domingo's pole, should have made this an exercise of such futility and frustration, that people's lives ought to have been dominated by despair and oppression. While many were overcome by their conditions of life, the majority did not succumb too easily and if existence in the shanty town was often bleak, with suffering, hunger, premature death and permanent insecurity, there was also time for *fiesta*, laughter and enjoyment.

How did these strategies work (see Crow, 1989: 1-24; Watson, 1990: 485-498; Okely, 1983:29)? What was their deeper functioning?

With these questions I found myself attempting to revisit the Social Anthropology courses studied in my training for the Ministry. The implications, never properly understood in the lecture rooms of the Theological Seminary, began to take on a different imperative and a renewed interrogation when faced with the demands of concrete reality. However, the pressures of work in a *población* during this most difficult of periods in Chile's history, made it virtually impossible to seriously inform my work with anthropological theory or comparative ethnography. Many of the theoretical questions emerging from the more practical demands would have to await exploration for another time. (This questioning led me first of all to post-graduate studies in Chicago where I was supervised by an Edinburgh trained anthropologist. As a result I subsequently arrived at the Anthropology Department at Edinburgh University).

Such an anthropological turn is not easy to make and perhaps made more difficult from the perspective of one burdened with the 'baggage' of being a Roman Catholic priest. To make matters worse, I was forced to carry the extra burden of being labelled a "missionary". The word alone evokes images of cultural imperialism, and not without foundation. In Pickering's opinion:

> . . . the work of missionaries helped to break up age-long cultures. It was they, the missionaries, more than any other Western Intruder, who wanted to change the ideological and 'philosophical' system at the heart of every local culture. In the place of the old, bastard substitutes were created, which were half-European, half-native and which gave rise to apathy or anomie. The charge levelled against missionaries has been all the more strengthened in recent times by the emergence and legitimization of religious pluralism in Western society, a decline of adherence to Christianity in Europe and by the collapse of European empires - empires that propagated a sense of cultural and religious triumphalism (Pickering, 1992:101).

I would not entirely agree with this assessment. Indeed, 'glasshouses and stones' come plainly to mind at this point. The Sioux anthropologist Deloria suggests that in this regard there is little to choose between missionaries and anthropologists. He says of the missionaries: 'One of the major problems of the Indian people is the missionary. It has been said of missionaries that

when they arrived they only had the Book and we had the land; now we have the book and they have the land ' (Deloria, 1970: 83). Of the anthropologist, however, he comments: 'Into each life, it is said, some rain must fall . . .But Indians have been cursed above all other people in history. Indians have anthropologists' (1970: 83). This antipathy towards the anthropologist is very much due to the experience of the Sioux having their identity reshaped into an exotic culture through an imagined past. It ill behoves the anthropologist to point the finger at the colonialist involvement of missionary work when their own lack of innocence in that respect has been so thoroughly documented (Asad, 1975).

This brings into relief the fact that missionaries and anthropologists actually have more in common than is often admitted (at least by anthropologists). As Van der Geest (1990:589), points out it is hardly unknown for the anthropologist to actually use the missionary's house as a place of refuge. The missionaries with a long term residency in an area have often managed to gather certain 'creature comforts' around them which the visiting anthropologist is not slow to share. Hochegger (1980: 171) suggests that the silence on this topic is often related to the fact that they feel ashamed to admit that a good deal of their 'fieldwork' was spent in the comfortable house of the missionary. More is expected of them than this, he suggests. Barley, however, admits that he would not have survived in the field except for the companionship of the missionaries (Barley, 1986).

Putting stereotypes aside might allow us to see, as Van der Geest suggests, that anthropologists and missionaries actually resemble each other in positive ways:

> Both are conscious of their ethnocentric points of departure and of their bondage to prevailing political and economic powers, and try to free themselves from these. . . Both anthropologists and missionaries seek to approach the others 'from below' and 'from within' (1990: 593).

Pels makes an interesting observation when he points to the simultaneous rise of Liberation Theology and reflexive/critical anthropology:

> . . . while reflexive anthropologists brought home the necessity to study themselves first . . . liberation theologists urged missionaries to convert themselves first [to another culture] . . . Reflexive anthropologists try to show how culturally determined their own

> scientific conceptions are. . . while modern missiologists argue that their own culture is polygamist. . . Pagan. . . or syncretic (Pels, 1987: 6-7).

Missionaries and anthropologists compare favourably in the face of these challenges. It should be noted that Christian churches now often play a leading role in the struggle against, and criticism of, repressive regimes. The emergence of Liberation Theology has done much to correct the colonialist tendencies: 'The outsider who becomes an insider, understands and respects 'the other' and takes their side' (Van der Geest, 1990: 595).

The issue of language is another favourable comparison. The importance of learning the language well is essential in order to enter deeply into another culture. Given that the missionaries usually go to another culture with the intention of staying there for a number of years they will tend to make an investment in learning the language well (*pace* Campbell, 1989: 16). Given this fluency in the language, together with a longer period of stay than the average anthropologist, it might not be unreasonable to claim that:

> ....missionaries become more integrated into the communities in which they work. Not only are they *seen* as such by the local populace who become fully accustomed to their presence, they also *feel* that way. Their interests lie *there*. The fact that their destiny partly overlaps that of the local population is bound to have a deep influence on their position in 'the field'. One could call the missionary an immigrant. . . Anthropologists however, resemble visitors. The shortness of their stay marks their experience and their relationships with others (Van der Geest, 1990: 595).

Pickering himself does go on to admit that since the end of the Second World War the traditional Christian churches have begun to take on a less destructive approach to the culture of missionized societies (1992:101). The emphasis on "conversion" and proselytism has begun to give way to a growing sensitivity to the issues around cultural imperialism, not just from the religious perspective but also from the political and economic. An awareness of the structural elements of poverty, inequality, oppression and injustice in the world has created a more critical attitude to social, political and economic organisation.

It would seem fair to argue that the religious role I had to assume required at least as much skill in observation, understanding and awareness of the 'self' as that required in the anthropological endeavour. The criticisms that the first

might lack the necessary rigour do not, I believe, hold up to close examination. In any case similar accusations are commonly heaped upon anthropology by those who see themselves as exercising a 'harder' form of social science, as the difference between being 'subjective' and 'objective'. This finger pointing is no more relevant for the latter than for the former. As Campbell succinctly puts it:

> The contrast between 'subjective' and 'objective' is a bogus distinction. 'Subjective', like 'impressionistic', is intended to indicate that the work referred to lacks rigour, precision, control and 'scientific objectivity', but I suspect that the reproachful implications of the term indicate no more than that the work does not conform to the critics expectations. If something slips beyond the reach of received judgement it provokes uneasiness and suspicion (Campbell, 1989:13).

Furthermore, as Okely points outs:

> In anthropological participant observation there is a greater reciprocity in the exchange of information. Here the problem of subjectivity becomes explicit. The fieldworker, as opposed to those who analyse other people's material, has a peculiarly individualistic and personal confrontation with 'living' data. This close contact has made anthropologists feel vulnerable to criticism from those who employ formal techniques of distancing between subject and object. Hence the peculiar coyness which anthropologists have shown in discussing their relationship with various people they have studied (1996:27-28).

I would argue that I, and many of my contemporaries, were engaged in a similar 'confrontation with living data' making us 'equally vulnerable' from the misapprehension of those who claim a greater certainty. As I have argued above, the context in which I worked, especially within the perspective of the theology of liberation, has more than a little in common with Social Anthropology. Just as social anthropologists like to distinguish themselves within the social sciences by the methodological approach of participant observation, an extended period of living at the heart of the social life of others, so liberation theologians claim that their theology and its practice, is not done from the perspective of the 'ivory tower', but one which is developed amongst, with and in commitment to the poor. For Gutierrez, borrowing a term from Antonio Gramsci, the theologian thus becomes a new kind of 'organic intellectual' and someone who is 'vitally engaged in historical realities with specific times and places' and who will be 'engaged where nations, social classes, people struggle to free themselves from domination and oppression

by other nations, classes and people' (1973:13). Segundo, similarly, regarding two alternative theologies, one as an academic profession versus one as revolutionary activity, says:

> I must confess that I can understand those who refuse to do theology or have anything to do with it, because they feel it has no meaning or value for the liberation process, much better than I can understand those who practice it as an academic discipline in the security of some chamber immune to the risks of the liberation struggle (Segundo, 1975: 7-39).

These liberation theologians would identify with Okely when she describes the discipline of anthropology as an attempt to view from within and below in ways that can give voice to those not represented in the circles of power (Okely, 1983:232).

Nevertheless, while each aspires to participate in the lives of the people there are important differences in the approach of these disciplines. Campbell, speaking of the anthropologist, says that 'the commitment to our hosts is there. We don't only observe; we participate in their lives. We learn the language and we stay for long spells. But. . .the point of being there is the return. Coming home accomplishes the intent '. With one's material in tow, he continues, 'the value of the experience can then be realized in the conference halls and the journals and the other professional exchanges' (Campbell, 1989: 166-7). The difference here is that, for the most part, the liberation theologians have developed the practice of staying with their hosts and indeed, often, operating their academic life from that base. This is the case amongst the more famous figures but it is especially so amongst many of the lesser leaders of this theology, the pastoral agents working in the shanty towns and rural areas of Latin America. It is amongst these that I would place myself at that time.

Would it be too self-serving, too self-indulgent, to say that the anthropologist's objective might be described as: participation, the better to observe, whereas the focus of the liberation theologian might be described as observing, the better to participate. It is this manner of participation of the theologian which eventually involves the development within the situation of a new discourse, a narrative which is a carrier of new images and a new language of interpretation which aims quite specifically at having a transformative effect

upon the world which, in the case of Chile, was a world that was already undergoing profound and even brutal changes brought about by the military coup.

ETHNOGRAPHY AND LIBERATION

Liberation Theology presents itself not simply as a new theme for reflection, but as a critical reflection on historical praxis. In other words an important part of the method employed involves a recontextualizing of events within a history in which the 'poor' are denied the fruits of their labour and their dignity as persons. The corollary being that if the events of history act against the people then the people must themselves become actors in history in such a way as to turn it in their favour.

An ethnographer in the situation of the *población*, especially when the political temperature was running high, would have been faced with a particular problem, for any attempt at participation without political commitment would soon run into trouble. It was not long before visitors wishing to have contact with the cutting edges of events and practices in the *poblaciones* were placed in the position of having to decide where they stood. In that context there were no neutral observers (see Schneider, 1995). Those who were not clearly on the side of the struggle were considered to have opted by default for the dictator. Curiosity by means of neutrality was considered by many as merely another way of accepting the status quo. Any attempt at an ethnography free of political bias would have been seen as at best superficial and at worst complicity with Pinochet and his Regime. In either case it would perhaps be an irrelevant ethnography. As John and Jean Comaroff say:

> No ethnography can ever hope to penetrate beyond the surface planes of everyday life, to plumb its invisible forms, unless it is informed by the historical imagination - the imagination, that is, of both those who make history and those who write it (Comaroff and Comaroff, 1992:xi).

In my attempt at an ethnography of a situation in which the theology of liberation formed an important paradigm, I have tried to recognize that it is not possible to participate in a fictitious construction of "ethnographic Islands" (ibid; p.5) and that it is not tenable to "separate local communities from global systems, the thick description of particular cultures from the thin narrative of world events" (ibid; p.5). The choice whereby ethnography is allotted to the 'traditional community' and history to the modern world is no longer tenable.

It is necessary that ethnography and history go hand in hand in all attempts at an understanding of other worlds, recognizing, as Leví-Strauss says, that in both cases 'we are dealing with systems of representation' (1963:16-17). The history that the liberation theologian proposes is that of a global context, one of transnational capitalism, world structures of domination which had subsumed Chile but, in the process, disclosed the anti-human values of oppression and death which underlie them.

This need not be problematic for the ethnographer who 'must also give texts contexts and assign values to the equations of power and meaning they express'. Contexts, after all, are not just there. 'They too, have to be constructed analytically in light of our assumptions about the social world' (Comaroff and Comaroff, 1992:11).

If Liberation Theology can refocus the conservative texts of religion into a force for change then perhaps Social Anthropology might also represent a counter text to the structures of power. It is certain that our writings are potential instruments of 'othering' but we should not fail to recognize the political potential of being concerned with the 'nether regions', the lives of those who are ignored by the powerful and we are concerned to put the point of view from the bottom up. Neither should we discount the positive political possibilities that the challenges of cultural relativism pose to bourgeois consciousness (Comaroff and Comaroff, 1992:12).

I would argue that my experience as priest in the *población* and the experience of an ethnographer co-incide in the measure that both assume the task of attempting to enter the world of another, not merely within an exclusively micro-context, but with an eye on the implications of the larger picture. The priest and ethnographer, in this sense, would both need to re-focus their 'knowing-of-the-other' within a specific political context without which they would probably end up 'knowing' a lot less than they actually believed to be the case. Participation would then have challenging implications for them both, insofar as they are positioned subjects with their own history and experience which influences the way they perceive and understand (Rosaldo, 1984: 192-3). This means that both have to recognize that they cannot remain external to the events which are occurring around

them and to recognize in Hastrup's phrase that 'self and other, subject and object are categories of thought, not discreet entities' (1992: 117).

Obviously the observation of events, in the creation of which I was deeply implicated, remains problematic. Indeed, as I have indicated, many of the events might not have taken place at all had I not encouraged and supported those who organised it. In other words, far from just observing, I was often, in fact, an instigator and, furthermore, one who was involved in a wider sub-plot to encourage people to move through the threshold of fear in order to engage in the task of constructive opposition to the military dictatorship. My personal presence, as representative of the Catholic Church, gave many meetings and events a legitimacy not only in the eyes of many of the participants but also to the authorities had they decided to intervene (or at least it might have caused them some confusion). My participation in the events was not simply in order to better observe, to learn, to get inside, to understand, to know, although all of these were as important to me as to any ethnographer, but also to motivate, to encourage, to push, to cajole, to teach, to organise and to facilitate creative responses to the daily experience of oppression, injustice, poverty and fear. Nevertheless, I would suggest that it was a risk that had to be taken both in order to achieve the trust necessary for a deeper participation and because of the moral imperatives implied in that particular context.

This was the theology and the political action to which I was committed. In what follows I write about events as someone who had a manifest commitment; and, therefore, my account is more "positioned" than may be usual in a Ph.D Thesis

MEMORIES ARE MADE OF THIS

However, I am faced with a further problem. 'Being there' is only part of the process. Participation and observation, although necessary, are not in themselves the whole process. From a social anthropological perspective communicating this experience is an equally important moment. Indeed it is at this point that the liberation practitioner and the social anthropologist might indeed go their separate ways. The one compelled by the imperative to participate the further, the other to go off and write of the experience in such a way that others might have access to it for a more comparative understanding.

So the dilemma in which I now find myself is precisely how this 'experience' was contained, how have I carried it from the field and the manner of its treatment once removed. Not being engaged in a formal anthropological endeavour (I argue that I was 'anthropologising' nevertheless) I did not, as orthodox method would have me do, write field-notes. Although, it is important to add that I have subsequently used documents which I had written over the years: official reports, papers for conferences and assemblies, letters to colleagues, friends, families and employers. These proved of immense value in stimulating and verifying the reliance on my own memory. But, nevertheless, I am mindful of Firth's warning that memory 'is a treacherous guide' (1959:25). I also note the warning of Davis when he says:

> You will be aware of the weakness of human nature, at any rate in your colleagues; and you will know that the exigencies of argument may stimulate wholly honest men, whom you would trust with your handbag, to create facts and to colour events retrospectively; you will be on your guard to be sure that you are not as other people are. In general, it is fair to say, memory is not a good base for rigorous or systematic treatment unless you can demonstrate to yourself in some other area of your inquiry that you have total recall. . . . otherwise you should be very careful before you base elaborated or crucial arguments on intuitive data and on memory (Davis, 1984:305).

Memory may be useful but not reliable, although he also suggests that it is likely that we can retain in our memories ' a better sense of the feel of some events than you were able to capture, in hurried notes made late at night. It is false purism, utterly bogus to deny validity to this kind of knowledge' (p.304).

Nevertheless, the weight of the argument in general inclines towards the need for fieldnotes. "They are shorthand statements, *aides-mémoire* that stimulate the re-creation, the renewal, of things past" (Bond, 1990:274). Fieldnotes are the *sine qua non* of the anthropological enterprise, the touchstone of anthropological integrity, "an anthropologist's most sacred possession" (Bond, 1990:273) and a symbol of professional identity.

However, in her survey of American fieldworker's attitudes to fieldnotes, Jean Jackson points out that the notion about what they are varies greatly (1990:3-33). Some fieldworkers include notes on things they have read, others give local assistants blank notebooks to make their own notes, one even included

a fieldnote in the form of a ceramic dish for roasting sausages. Most of her interviewees included the notion of fieldnotes as a "running log written at the end of each day". For some their notes are "scientific and rigorous because they are a record, one that helps prevent bias and provides data other researchers can use for other ends". Yet for others fieldnotes are a record of their own reactions. Many gave emphasis to the mnemonic aspects, the purpose being to help in the reconstruction of an event. Some of those interviewed had a more negative attitude to fieldnotes seeing them as interfering with "doing" anthropology or a reason why anthropology is not keeping up with the competition (e.g. sociology) in rigour. Then there are those who consider fieldnotes as "the distinguishing feature separating superior anthropologists from journalists, amateurs, and superficial, number crunching sociologists". She goes on to say:

> I have argued that anthropologists' opinions and feelings about fieldnotes can tell us much about the anthropological enterprise: how it straddles the fence between science and the humanities; how it distinguishes itself from its sister social science disciplines; and how it creates its own pecking orders, prods, rewards, and justifications for doing "good" fieldwork. . . . If "the field" is anthropology's version of both the promised land and an ordeal by fire, then fieldnotes symbolize what journeying to and returning from the field mean to us: the attachment, the identification, the uncertainty, the mystique, and, perhaps above all, the ambivalence (Jackson, 1990:3).

Where does all this leave me? I lived for eight years with a cultural "other", yet have few formally recognizable, objective records of that encounter, no symbol of my journey, no 'badge of office', only certain documents and my 'unreliable' memory. And if this was not sufficient, I was not even there with the intention of doing anthropological fieldwork in the first place. Have I then failed at the first hurdle? Is the real anthropological enterprise denied me and am I now forced to exist only on a secondary level as a mere "armchair or amateur anthropologist"? Lack of comprehensive fieldnotes and the related problems of memory would both seem to present an obstacle to my subsequent writing.

However, even in more formal anthropology, the question of the place of fieldwork, fieldnotes and the role of memory can also be seen as problematic. Cohen, in his discussion on post-fieldwork fieldwork, comments that his 'version' of Whalsay, written after fieldwork, over a period of fifteen years,

was, in many respects a temporary one (Cohen 1992b: 341). Going back to this work some years later he was surprised to discover that he had still not stopped changing his mind, adding: 'I did not expect to feel quite so uncertain about my understanding and analysis of people I thought I had come to know quite well' (ibid; p 341). He goes on to quote Ottenberg: 'In this sense the field experience does not stop. Things that I once read in my fieldnotes in one way, I now read in another' (Ottenberg, 1990: 146). Cohen's dilemma is that: 'one can only regard ethnographic interpretation, therefore, as temporary, as continually subject to revision. It is that provisional nature of interpretation which really constitutes my problem' (1992b: 346).

The way forward, Cohen suggests, is to take the 'emic expedition' as far as we can, but then, with immense care, dare to 'step outside of our customary canonical restraints to explore the use of extraneous experience and "post hoc" ethnographic interpretation as a potential guide to the indigenous puzzle' (ibid; 351).

The important point, at least as far as my own problem is concerned, is that Cohen appears to acknowledge that a re-reading of the text some time after the original experience implies more than a mistrust of unreliable memory. On the contrary, it is an opportunity for further understanding. He goes on to say that: 'the passage of time and the accumulation of other experiences shake the secure foundations of our common descriptive and interpretative devices' (ibid;348). A return to the topic implies a new revision.

What is happening here is a questioning of the accepted logical progression of the anthropological enterprise. In this, one goes to the field to gain familiarity by participation. During these observations notes are made recording the data which is subsequently analysed once back at home. This was the way to proceed within the positivistic paradigm with, as Holy says, 'Its ideas about the constitution and existential status of its subject matter (or its theory of social phenomena), its ideas about itself (or its theory of social science as a science) and its ideas about the way its practitioners gather their data (or its research methods)' (Holy, 1990: 26).

Within this framework my appeal to be allowed to "anthropologise" *post hoc* would not, I suspect, be greeted with enthusiasm in term of the first two aspects and perhaps with derision in terms of the last. In the use of

appropriate research methods I am an abject failure and should be banished to the library to produce research reviews, to sit at the feet of real ethnographers, and to release myself from the delusion that my non-scientific experience can stand shoulder to shoulder with the "right stuff".

In recent years there has been a paradigm shift (Kuhn, 1970) in the social sciences involving a change in emphasis from the use of scientific to more humanistic metaphors, where 'fieldnotes have gone from being viewed as scientific data to being seen as interpretive text ' (Ottenberg 1990:156). This lies at the heart of Cohen's dilemma. The act of writing fieldnotes is not a question of writing 'facts' which then represent a more certain kind of remembering. The very act of writing notes in the first place is itself an act of interpretation, its subsequent re-reading by the author is another part of this process, its writing-up becomes yet another, as does its subsequent reading by someone else. This would suggest that the central problematic issue is not necessarily that of memory but rather that of interpretation. As Holy emphasises:

> There is a clear move from the theory of social facts as things to the theory of social facts as constructions. This theory holds that facts exist only within a frame of reference, that there is no such thing as 'pure existence', no such thing as 'facts' that are recorded directly 'from nature'. Theoretical presuppositions are always involved . . . and in consequence, "a fact" is always the product of some interpretation. In the sphere of ideas about the status of social science, there is a distinct move away from the notion of the methodological unity of the natural and social sciences towards the realization that the social sciences require different methods of inquiry from those used in natural science investigations due to the subjective quality of social phenomena. And in the sphere of ideas about the way the researcher gathers his data, there is a distinct move from the notion of observation as the primary method of data gathering (Holy, 1990: 27).

There can be no observation without interpretation. Reality cannot be simply represented by a more or less accurate description. The illustrative elephant only partially experienced from different perspectives can no longer usefully be used as an image of reality. This is not so easily reduced to consisting of mere physical existence. Reality is not simply a question of the existence of objects and beings coexisting in space and time but of the relationships between them as perceived/constructed by people. Using a visual metaphor,

reality is as much about the space between objects and beings as it is about the objects and beings themselves.

The observer in the field is attempting to grasp these relationships and their meanings for those whose lives are immersed in them. He/she may or may not grasp the imputed relationships between objects and beings and may impute or assume quite distinct relationships. Objects and beings are visible, the relationships and meanings that occupy the space between them are not so easily accessed. Every new element introduced to a situation will, to a greater or lesser degree, change the picture and hence the co-relations. And thus reality is, in large measure, constituted by meaning which must at least *nuance* the notion of 'objective existence'.

Nevertheless, the ethnographer with his/her fieldnotes, even taking into account that they are a version, a construct of events, even allowing for their re-interpretation at different moments of their reading, at least have something that acts as a vehicle for that re-reading. The notes exist, they are tangible, they can be considered over a period of time. The same cannot be said of the memory.

Marigold Linton, a psychologist, (1982) wanted to see how memories actually became organised through time. Every day she wrote down descriptions of events that had occurred. She began to test herself at monthly intervals to see if she could remember not just the event but the date it occurred. The experiment lasted over twelve years. She discovered that her memory could recall recent events with precision, much like looking along a library shelf. However, as the years moved on, these same memories began to reorganise themselves into larger categories. They now began to be organized much more in terms of their content. They were now more easily accessible as being amongst the things done with friends, or at work. When they occurred began to take on less significance than what the event was.

For Kotre 'reference points are the key'. Using the characters in Agatha Christie novels as an example he points out that they do not say, 'That happened in 1930' or 'That happened in 1925'. They say 'That happened the year after the old mill burned down' or 'That happened after lightening struck the old mill' (1995: 86). In his view:

> The yielding of *when* to *what* in autobiographical memory is important because it leads to memory's real interest: the creation of meaning about the self. Before we can give an experience a lasting place in memory, we have to decide what it means. (ibid; p. 87).

In the fourth year of testing Linton noticed something interesting. Even though somethings were written down, when she now referred to them she found them meaningless. The problem was that the events had not connected with any subsequent patterns that had developed in her life (Linton, 1986).

There appears to be some agreement here with Cohen's recognition that the understanding of the past is not just a question of recapitulation but of reinterpretation in the light of more recent and existing personal development. Recalling the past cannot be divorced from the process of giving meaning to and in the present. The memories I recall in this thesis are not simply those of the events of actors I describe. They are memories of *my* events. *I* was standing there afraid, *I* was the one who provided the building for the meetings, Don Domingo was *my* friend, *I* cheered and wept when he defeated the arrogant politician. Do we dismiss the past lives of each other simply because they are not written down? We are all autobiographies in motion at any point in our lives.

My thesis is, in this sense, an autobiography, because it is based on my memory and my experience. It is reflexive; there is an ' I ' implicit throughout. I try to relate an account not just as observer but, as Okely puts it, as:

> . . .the self and category whom the others confronted, received and confided in.. . .Autobiographical accounts of fieldwork are not confined to self understanding in a cultural vacuum. They show how others related to the anthropologist and convey the ethnographic context (1992: 24).

My dilemma is unresolved. The quality of my 'being there', my participation, immersion and imperatives of observation, is not too far, I suspect, from the, perhaps, more intentional action of the anthropologist, but the memory remains suspect and ultimately as Von Leyden comments:

> . . .we cannot justify or validate our memories further than by allowing a great number, possibly the majority, to be reliable and hence by assuming that the sufficient conditions of remembering are in fact very often fulfilled. And thus it is that the reliance on the trustworthiness of

> memory in general is at once a premiss of our knowledge and also the embodiment of a philosophical problem (Von Leyden, 1961: 119).

IN RETROSPECT

In my own descriptions, lacking the support of systematic recordings, I am forced to avoid the finer exegesis and, to mix my metaphors, paint with strokes of a broader hue. The only exception is when I recount a dialogue between Domingo and the politician which I claim to 'replicate'. Of course we can never remember exact dialogues even with the use of contemporaneous notes unless we either use short hand or a recording device. Normally we can register many details but often are forced to rely on the thrust of discussion rather than fine detail. I have told this story many times even from the very day it occurred. Its impact at the time was so enormous upon me and others who were present, that no matter what words I am accused of placing in the mouths of the protagonists the story comes out the same. The final *dénouement* remains intact. However told the point remains the same: Don Domingo took the Big Man apart with exquisite logic.

The 'facts' I remember and describe can, in their broad thrust, be verified not only in my own documents but also in the public domain. Facts can always be verified if we take the time. Interpretation, however, is something for which the ethnographer must take a more personal responsibility.

Fieldnotes are a text, culture is a text, our experience, our autobiography is text: all of them existing in relationship and the possibility of interpretation and re-interpretation in an ever changing present. The anthropological enterprise is about relationships and so must necessarily participate in that constant to-ing and fro-ing between the known and the mysterious and which implies the respect which allows "the other" to define themselves and not just to be defined, to see the mysterious as a challenge to understanding, not permission to fictionalize "the other" in self-indulgent fantasy (Okely 1992:2).

The events which I narrate have never been, for me, simply about 'facts', data which might be more or less accurate. They are remembered with emotion. I cannot recall these events without feeling, even years after they occurred, that same tingle of recognition that one is in the presence of one of those important moments when something has changed, a moment of growth when a "poor" *poblador* articulated the heart of the question of political, social and

cultural power: Power for whom? Who decides? And for what ends? If the authenticity of this memory is then to be questioned, if the suggestion is to be made that my description is flawed by the distance of time, by the weakness of memory and by the fanciful imagination which can make any event be what we would really like it to have been, then I have no more argument to convince. Or perhaps as Rapport suggests maybe this is the nature of the enterprise which we do realistically, 'not expecting wholly to convince' (1993).

I can only say that there are many ways of remembering but the most important is a memory of a moment where we experience a transformation in ourselves. On recalling these events the emotions come alive again in the midst of our present concerns, projects and meanings and, in that sense, they appear in new contexts and take on new implications and meanings. They become new. It is here that mere description is inadequate, the facts too bare to capture the "reality". Even if time has slightly embellished the events then all the better, because the emotive memory of the transformations bear greater testimony than mere data because they are themselves already interpretations of deeper levels of meaning and not just to the ethnographer.

Perhaps the structure of my argument is as tenuous as Don Domingo's house. With a withering word it might yet be brought tumbling around my ears. But, like Domingo, for good or for bad, I have no other option but to rest here and at least put my faith - not in *la Virgen* - but in the certain knowledge that my friends in *Lo Errazuriz* were transformed by the events I narrate, and this author along with them.

CHAPTER 2

THE PROCESSION

THE PROCESSION

As far as religious processions go it was quite a good turn out for the *población*. As usual it was headed by one of the men, *El Bigote* (the moustache), carrying a large wooden cross painted blue with a white star fixed to the intersection and a red cloth draped over the cross piece. Across the arms were written the words *Comunidad Cristiana* and down the length: the words *Lo Errazuriz*, the name of the *población*.

Behind the cross was *El Padre* (the priest) dressed in the customary long white robe (alb) with a stole around the neck. His presence and form of dress made the procession "official". Immediately behind the priest, as the procession began to form, were about 30 young girls, 12 years of age, all wearing what are called 'first communion' dresses but in fact are miniature copies of bridal dresses with a white veil. This 'tradition' is a common Roman Catholic practice introduced by missionaries from Europe and now so entrenched that it causes open warfare for any suggestion to be made that a more appropriate dress might be used in the ceremony which marks the moment when the child is allowed, for the first time, to take full part in the Sunday, Catholic ritual of the Eucharist. Whenever I asked the mothers why they wanted their daughters to be dressed in this way a common response (apart from: "because this is the way it is done") was that this would be the one and only time that they would be able to wear white "honestly". Implying that by the time the girls were of marriageable age they could not be expected to be virgins (I suspect that there is a good deal more sexual meaning around this 'first communion' ritual but the exploration of this issue must await another opportunity).

Behind the girls in the procession were a similar number of boys many dressed in white trousers, white shirt, white tie but others dressed in an assortment of colours. There were few rules about what the boys should wear. This was not 'first communion' day which had been held the previous week; this was a customary, second chance to show off the children in a

formal procession of the *capilla* through the streets of the *población*. The girls and the boys each carried a single flower.

Next in line were the parents. Many of these would not appear again at a Church ceremony until they required another service of the official Church like baptism or 'first communion' of another child. It was important for them that the children made their 'first communion' although this in no way implied any long term commitment to the official religion and needs to be understood more as an expression of 'popular religion'. Behind the parents were the members of the *Comunidad Ecclesial de Base* (CEB), on this occasion numbering about a hundred, and amongst them were about twenty members of the local Communist Party.

And so the procession set off from the *Capilla*, the never to be completed construction of the chapel/meeting place of the CEB. The route was circuitous, passing down the steep embankment of the railway cutting that divided the *población* in two. On the journey, as the procession passed up each street, others began to join in and eventually this long line of people began to number about three hundred. Guitarists were stretched out at strategic intervals and attempted (and usually failed) to accompany and co-ordinate the singing. For all intents and purposes, to the casual observer, this was just another religious procession in a poor *barrio* except for one detail which seemed out of place. Many of the adults were carrying placards, something not traditionally associated with this kind of event. The placards carried hand written slogans upon them such as:

"Break the chains of injustice - let the oppressed go free".

"Alas for you who are rich: you are having your consolation now."

"Alas for you who have plenty now: you shall go hungry".

"Let the oppressed go free".

Each placard carried a small reference in the bottom right hand corner referring the reader to the relevant biblical passage from which the quotation was taken. In order to begin to understand the significance of this event it is necessary to note that after nine years of military rule, political action was still forbidden under the "State of Exception" and the "State of Siege" that dominated the law under Pinochet. Political parties were forbidden to operate,

political activity (and as defined by the government this was broad concept) was suspended and was illegal. The punishment ranged from sudden disappearance, to arrest, torture and even death. The protests which were to spill over into the streets of the major cities were events which were only on the horizon at this moment in time and so under the 'umbrella' of this religious event an act of political significance was taking place.

Eventually, after about forty five minutes, the group, now hot and dusty after walking down the dirt roads of the *población*, arrived at the piece of wasteland on the north western part of the *barrio*. This is situated by the side of the road that led from the city to the large suburb of *Maipú* in between which the *población* of *Lo Errazuriz* was placed. This patch of land was known locally as "*la cancha de los ejecutados*", "the field of the executed". Eight years previously a military lorry had driven off the road here and four prisoners were thrown out of the back. Witnesses said that the four were immediately told to run. As they set of across the wasteland the military opened fire on them and they were literally shot to pieces. The remains lay there for the next twenty four hours. The climate of intimidation, of which this formed an integral part, meant that no one had the courage to move them. Many came to look but no one did anything. Eventually, some of the women did go to the local airforce base to complain and the bodies were finally removed. To this day nobody knows their names, the image, however, remained in the minds of the people. This single act continued to serve as a means of psychological control even years after the event itself. A constant reminder of the dangers of political participation in opposition to the military.

During the following years someone had built a small shrine, of the type that appeared at the scene of fateful road accidents. These shrines were known as "*animitas*" and it was believed that the "souls" of those who died suddenly and violently remained at the point of the tragedy. These could act as mediators with the divine and favours could be granted by the placing of a lighted candle. Someone else, apparently involved in some church demolition, had actually placed on the site a full sized statue of an angel with a broken wing together with an assortment of smaller statues of a selection of saints. All these things served to make the place one of mystery, fear and awe in popular imagination.

The procession now formed a circle in the centre of this place. After a song, Juan Carlos, the president of the Community at that time, spoke. He explained that the Christian Community was gathering at this place in order to remember the four "*hermanos desconocidos*", unknown brothers, who had died because they had dared to hold alternative views to "those in power". He said that this was a re-enactment of the essence of Christian belief. That Jesus too had been executed for daring to have an alternative vision to those in power, a vision based not on greed or desire for power, not based on oppression and violence but one of love and cooperation, equality and justice where the "poor would inherit the earth and the rich would be invited to sell all that they had and share it". His emotive speech was interspersed at regular intervals by a short sung refrain:

> Christ Jesus, join us, be one with us. Lord my God, join us, be one with us. Christ Jesus be on our side, not with the oppressor who exploits and devours what all should possess, but with the oppressed, with my people thirsting for peace.

This was followed by the most popular Church song at that time the rather frenetic Nicaraguan Creed:

> Firmly I believe, God,
> that your prodigious mind created this whole earth
> and, Primitive Painter, to your artist's hand beauty owed its birth: the stars and the moon, the houses, the lakes, the little boats bobbing down the river to the sea, vast coffee plantations, white cotton fields and the forests felled by the criminal axe.

It mattered little that these images of coffee and white cotton fields and forests felled by axes were all Nicaraguan images from where the song was taken. They continued:

> In you I believe,
> architect, engineer, craftsman, carpenter, builder and bricklayer.
> In you I believe, maker of thought and music, maker of the wind, maker of peace and love.
>
> Christ the worker, I believe you
> light of light and God's true only begotten son,
> that to save the world in Mary's humble womb
> you grew and became a man.
> I believe that you were beaten, treated with scorn,
> Martyred on the cross under Pilate's command.

The imperialist Roman, heartless villain,
tried to wipe away his error by washing his hands.

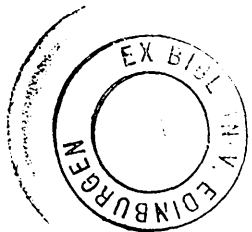
The word *Imperialista* was always emphasised with great gusto as were the words *trabajador* (worker) and *Libertad* (freedom).

I believe in you, friend,
human Christ, Christ the worker,
death you've overcome. Your fearful suffering
brought forth the new human being
born for freedom.
You still rise again each time we
raise an arm to defend the people
from profiteering dominion,
because you are alive on the farm, in the factory and in the school.
I believe your fight goes on,
I believe in your resurrection.

As "*El Bigote*" raised up the cross, the children placed the flowers they were carrying into the centre of the circle. The priest lifted up a handful of earth and said:
"This earth has been consecrated by the blood of martyrs who died in the struggle for a new world of justice and peace. This is a holy place from which we draw the strength to continue that struggle. To risk our lives as they did that all might have life. Let us return to our homes renewed in our determination, strengthened in our resolve to build a new world for these children, where there is no more fear , no more poverty, violence or injustice and where the lion lies down with the lamb".

There was a pause. Then suddenly and unexpectedly "*La Charro*", the local Communist Party leader could control herself no longer and shouted out: "*Compañero Salvador Allende*!" the Marxist president overthrown by Pinochet and who died defending the presidential palace. "*Presente*", the crowd shouted, including the children. "*Compañero, Salvador Allende*!" she called a second time. "*Presente*", the crowd shouted even louder. "*Compañero Salvador Allende*!", she shouted a third time. "*Presente! Ahora y siempre*"! Here! Now and forever!

The past and the present, the political and the religious merge and become one. A police car arrived at this point. The crowd quietly dispersed and everyone went home.



BECOMING

In a naive moment I imagined it possible to place the Chilean people alongside icons of anthropology such as the Trobrianders, the Nuer or the Azande and, with analysis born of sound anthropological method, render their world meaningful to others. In a more reflective mode I recognized that to congregate the people with whom I lived into a discrete conglomerate to which a single label could be applied, would be achieved only by the construction of an illusion. As Campbell argues:

> Looking for systems is an attempt to tame congeries of unruly phenomena by simplifying them, reducing them, and bringing them into clusters of principles which are expressed in ever more formal, abstract, statements (1989:11)

Questions concerning what is systematic about Chilean social life, about the rules which guide the people in a collective endeavour, turn as arid in the mind as bitter in mouth when faced with the horrific events which had taken place at the 'field of the executed' in those early days of the military *coup*. To what system of collective identity might we appeal in order to explain such a massacre, and only one of many, of Chileans by Chileans? The most immediate answer, of course, would be: to the military dictatorship. But this would only beg further, perhaps more imponderable, questions.

An understanding of the implications of that event is not to be found in an 'archeology' of the 'Chileness' of the protagonists. Though history, culture and social structure might well account for events 'here' rather than 'there', in 'this way' rather than 'that'. Perhaps, in the final analysis, it will be grasped in the wider question about how human beings can come to commit such acts upon other human beings and how, in the face of this, others react in their various ways. The scene is Chile; the drama is human. And in those dreadful moments on that piece of wasteland, as on many other wastelands in space and time, we find, perhaps, that we too are implicated.

Indeed, as I walked along the processional route that day, I felt drawn into the complexity of its many dimensions. On the one hand I was aware that this was an immediate event, of religious belief, of social convention, yet on the other, the nervousness of the participants was evidence enough that this present moment could have turned, in a second, into one of danger. Events

from the past were being carried along towards uncertain outcomes in the future. Many levels of thought and emotion were present in the group but equally in many of those who simply watched from the pavement or the more secure sanctuary of their tiny houses. Then there was the invisible presence of the police and the military, weighing upon the sentiments, adding a note of constant alarm to the hymns and songs.

The event was a movement through time and space, parts of which could be physically experienced and others simply imagined. I would agree with Turner's view here that 'the social world is a world in becoming not a world in being (except insofar as "being" is a description of the static, atemporal models men have in their heads)' (1974:24) and thus, I must concur with his corollary that 'for this reason studies of social structure as such are irrelevant. . .because there is no such thing a static action' (ibid;).

Of course, we must not assume that 'becoming' implies, either in some Darwinian or 'theological' sense, a necessary movement for the better. On the contrary; for I suspect that our experience will too often demonstrate that while human beings can, indeed, become better than they were, they can equally become worse. We have the ability to create but also the capacity to use that ability to destroy. But, in either case, to stand still is not an option, and even in the attempt we, nevertheless, 'become' even if we only 'become' indifferent.

'Becoming' then, is a word with a tenor of movement, of process, of direction. It is a supposition that human beings stagnate when static and thrive when in action. Which is why most of what follows is a commentary on movement; now a small step, now a leap; now a pathway to hope, now a *cul-de-sac* of despair. And, thus, a movement through the streets of a *población* becomes a metaphor of reaching for a goal; a procession to a field of dread becomes a metaphor for confronting fear. The goal is reached at journey's end, the fear extinguished when fear is finally faced.

It is in this sense that we can begin to understand the procession to the 'field of the executed' where, in the very first movement, a vital clue discloses the intent. For, in the cross of the Christian Community, carried proudly by Lucho, we find a key which unlocks the moment .

AMBIGUITY

The colours of the cross with its star and cloth draped across it, were not accidental; they were a clear reflection of the red, white and blue of the Chilean flag with its white star in the top left hand corner. 'Churchness' and 'Chileness' were thus bound together in a dialectical symbol establishing a claim that the military dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet could not appropriate to itself the power to define being Chilean. Here in the *población* and the *Comunidad Ecclesial de Base*, Basic Church Community (C.E.B.), there was a counter claim being made and a statement of resistance being registered. Every C.E.B. in Chile, mostly in the *poblaciones*, had a similar cross displaying its own name, becoming, in this way, a national and not simply a local statement.

And yet, this statement was ambiguous. It was possible to look at the cross and see simply a cross, to look upon an emblem of identity and see the Christian Community held high. Or, one could see the flag in the shape of a cross and so the event which followed behind beginning to take on other, deeper political meanings.

It is in this ambiguity of the cross that we can begin to detect a means of resistance to the imposed order of the government. For ambiguity can be usefully understood in terms of space, and, as such, movement within it becomes possible. Thus, ambiguity, rather than a failure of precision, provides the possibility for the exploration and extension of meanings (Scheffler, 1979:11-31). The procession to the 'field of the executed' was, almost in its entirety, an exercise in ambiguity. On the one hand it was a political event highlighted by the use of placards with politically pertinent slogans. There appeared to be an intention, on the part of the organisers and many of the participants, to make a political statement about the oppression of the military government and the need to react against this. On the other hand it was a religious event highlighted by the cross, the priest, the 'first communion' contingent and the fact that the statements on the placards, although implicitly politically critical, in their explicit formulation suffered a shift of register by proving to be quotations from the bible. The final event on the wasteland while having a political focus, a recollection of a political culture now forbidden by law, a moment of political education, is overlaid by a consecration, a blessing, a calling to mind of the religious myth of dying in order to rise again. It is a performance of sublime and necessary ambiguity.

This ambiguity was, above all, a matter of security. Indeed, over the following years, more than one policeman or soldier would be confounded and confused in their attempt to remove placards only to be confronted by the claim that they were direct quotes from the bible. "Is the government now banning the bible?" was a typical repost to an attempt at objection. Ambiguity at this level was the space to be able to 'duck and weave' between domains at any given moment, giving advantage to the protagonists while keeping the authorities 'on the back foot'.

However, this was only part of its usefulness because, for the participants, shielded to some degree by this security aspect, there was also the opportunity to develop levels of political organisation, thought and action forbidden under military rule. And there was, perhaps the most important aspect of all, the didactic element. It was here that the ambiguity of the activity produced a space for exploration and education. Ambiguity was hardly an unknown concept in the social life of the *población* as we can see in the example of the young girls dressed 'as if' brides. This was a first communion ceremony, part of a religious rite, and yet there was an element of a flickering, to and fro, between this religious act and the sexual imagery of innocence soon to be lost. It is interesting that many of the mothers (for this was their territory) appeared to have little difficulty in negotiating between these two domains of meaning, and not only that, being able to articulate their awareness of what they were doing when asked.

Ambiguity might often be subtle, but it was common currency. And it was this capacity for ambiguity that was to become a key element in the processes of formation and education, political organisation, thought and action over the following years. In fact it is probably correct to say that these processes were a journey from ambiguity, by means of ambiguous symbols, towards a certain clarity of purpose. After all, ambiguity is a means not an end.

And so the ambiguity of the event under consideration depended, primarily, on its being constituted as belonging to either one or the other of two familiar domains (or three if we include the sexual motif) on the one hand religious and on the other political. Of course religion and politics are always related. Religion is rarely free from political implications insofar as it disposes people to view their world in certain ways. Together with art, philosophy and science,

politics and religion are in the business of producing, interpreting, mediating, imposing, challenging, confirming, changing, and creating, the world that we live in (Edelman, 1985; Kuhn, 1970). They attempt to give shape and texture, tone and meaning by the production of paradigms and models, metaphors and images that both try to describe reality and prescribe how we should act within it. Often they operate as discrete entities and pretend to give uni-vocal meaning to the world. Occasionally they blend and merge, borrowing models and metaphors in ways that sometimes free the imagination and at other times conspire to build higher the prison walls of 'certitude'. Nevertheless, the tactic of separation of the two domains in a formal sense, while attempting to unite them ever more closely in terms of their content, was the means by which a social and political space was constructed which became a bed-rock for future development. Attempts by the military authorities to suborn this process was constantly thwarted by the sudden change of appearance of the 'enemy'. The attempt to wrest away the flag merely left them holding the cross.

SPACE

Ambiguity, then, creates space; space, in turn, is a prerequisite for movement. This sense of a space where some kind of movement might be achieved was in sharp contrast to the prevailing mood of the times which was socially claustrophobic. The country was in a state of perpetual supervision reinforced by a system of police informers, demonstrated by the occasional military operations in the *poblaciones*, the arbitrary arrests, disappearances and even murders. No real attempt was made to disguise these activities. There was no need for ambiguity here. The purpose, indeed, was to send the clear, and decidedly unambiguous, message that dissent was not to be tolerated. Political activity was banned, criticism of the regime was not allowed. Deviation would be dealt with firmly.

In this context, there was little room for manoeuvre. The law and its brutal application were the antithesis of movement. Oppression was a major social experience: of pressure, of being pressed down, of being unable to move. Even the majority of the *pobladores* who would steer well clear of political involvement during the coming years, could not escape this sense of being locked into a situation from which they could not escape. The unemployment, poverty, even hunger and sickness, especially amongst the children, were part of their daily and inescapable reality.

The chink in the regime's armour was religion, or more accurately, it was the Catholic Church. This was the one area that the authorities could not control. In other times this might not have mattered too much, the Catholic Church has been only too willing in its history to co-operate with totalitarian regimes. But in Chile, the Church played an astute political role centring much of its criticisms not directly against the government *per se* but rather against the effects of its policies on human lives. Human rights became the key criterion of judgement and 'solidarity' a term for the attempt to publicly recognise and alleviate its abuses. The criticism against those who caused these abuses was implicit in the commentaries and actions of the Church hierarchy and, indeed, it really needed little imagination to realise that the distance between this and an explicit criticism was only one of nuance.

In the *poblaciones* even this small distance between what was said and what was meant was considered, by many, to be insufficient. The difference was that while no one expected the Catholic Bishops themselves to suffer directly this was not the case for the ordinary people. The astuteness at work in the *población* owed less to necessities of political manoeuvre and more to the need not to draw attention to individuals who would only too easily suffer the consequences of their actions.

However, it was in this search for political space, through the one space left unoccupied, that made the Catholic Church an important player, at least in the first ten years of military rule. Here, was a context that allowed for the first steps in discussions that went beyond the closed groups of the still clandestine political parties. Here, in the Christian Communities, contact could be made and political culture developed among a wider group of people. Here, the first steps could taken towards the 're-massification' of politics in an active sense.

It might seem that this was simply a case of political parties masquerading behind church activities for their own party political ends. In fact this was often the case. Nevertheless, for the most part, the political parties did not have the 'militants' in sufficient numbers for this to be a serious endeavour. They themselves were seriously 'disarticulated' by the events of September 11th and, indeed, were as much in need of space to develop as anyone else.

The Christian Communities of the *poblaciones* became a space in the political landscape where the slow development of opposition began to take root; but the space was more than physical. It was not just a matter of meeting rooms and churches. It was, as we have seen in the procession, a question of finding a language with which to 'talk politics' in a new way, in new circumstances. And so we can see how religious imagery begins to re-discover its 'prophetic' role. Here, in the old biblical imagery of Israel, a denunciatory language was found as well as images that promoted the social emotions of hope and final victory.

We are able to witness then, the political, leaning upon religious imagery, seeking to create a democratic and critical space. Likewise the religious borrows political imagery in order to explore its own relevance in the world of oppression and intimidation, no longer as a justification of the *status quo*, its traditional role, but, here at least, as critical of it.

MOVEMENT

The procession itself grew out of a number of considerations, one of the most important being the traumatic impact of the murders upon the minds of the *pobladores*. After so many years the incident would still be brought up in conversation as people told of the effect upon them of the bodies being left on display. It would often be used as a major image of what happens to people if they get involved in politics. This was accompanied in the minds of many with a fascinated awe of the site. A sense of the presence of the dead that could bring misfortune. It was a dangerous place preferably avoided. Yet, paradoxically, there was the possibility of a doorway to the divine; a chance to receive a favour.

The site had a disquieting and yet mesmerising effect upon the *población*; always present just below the surface. The place subsumed two dominant spheres of meaning. In religious terms it was intimidatory, awe-ful, fearful. In political terms it was also intimidatory; a permanent reminder of the fate that awaited those who dared to oppose; a visual aid in fear; of the certain retribution that would be visited upon those who stepped outside the boundaries that had been marked. It was a permanent disincentive to political re-organisation especially for those *pobladores* whose political culture still survived, at least intellectually and emotionally. The very existence of the

población in the first place was the result of a political action organised by parties of the left who orchestrated *una toma* (an invasion of the land) taking it by force from its owners. Many of the people were no strangers to direct political action that involved taking significant risks. However, these events had taken place under a democratic government, the present circumstances were very different. Nevertheless, there was a sense amongst many that, despite the dangers, the problem of fear had to be overcome if there was ever to be an adequate response to Pinochet. In the secret political gatherings as well as in meetings of the CEB (and the two often combined) it was frequently stated that the symbols of fear had to be confronted and a spirit of resistance fostered once again.

And so, in the mixing together of popular religious belief with a religion of liberation, the product of the theology of liberation, and with the cooperation between the various left wing political groupings (the Communist Party being the largest), a consensus emerged, in the *Comunidad de Base*, that some of these things should finally be confronted. As a result these discussions, the procession emerged: a religious, political, and pedagogical act; and a rehearsal for future action.

The procession incorporates a number of indications of the major social tensions of that particular moment, both in the life of the *población* and of the country during the dictatorship of Pinochet. Some of the issues will be dealt with more fully and 'unpacked' in other chapters. At this point I would like to focus on the movement that appears to exist around the two domains clearly represented in the events of that day: the political and the religious. A sense of this movement can be detected if we look more closely at some of the elements involved.

- First of all, as we have seen, there is the cross which at the same time represents the flag and the nation. It is a symbol that had emerged during the years of military government and the interpretation I gave above had been suggested to me on many occasions in the *población*. However, there were others who preferred to understand it as a symbol of Christendom, an ideal of the rule of the state by the Church. This was not a widely held explanation and one that was increasingly questioned as the nature of the co-operation between the political and the religious began to emerge in its complexity.

- Secondly, there are the placards more normally associated with a political demonstration, appearing in a religious event; the political statements hidden behind biblical quotations (partly, as I have suggested, for security reasons). The slogans of this device became more daring as the political actions became more explicit and confrontational.

- Next, we have the presence, *en masse*, of both the CEB and the Communist Party.

- Then, there is the context of the place of the executed, viewed as a place that was both an example of the consequences of political involvement and of popular religious significance.

- There is the explicit speech of Juan Carlos linking Jesus and the four murdered men, all dying for having an alternative political vision.

- We have the mixing of images involved in the songs that were used to transform the divine into craftsman, carpenter, worker, victim of imperialist aggression. An image of a God who gives strength, not to put up with circumstances or to change them as if by magic, but whose example is relived as people struggle to defend themselves. The last two lines of the Nicaraguan Creed sum up this two sided nature of a religion taking upon itself the images of the political: "I believe your fight goes on - I believe in your resurrection".

- Finally we have the example of the intervention of *La Charro* with her insertion of Allende into the proceedings. This was not to the liking of everyone, especially those who preferred to interpret the event in purely religious terms or those parents who were only there for the prestige in producing a well turned out child in nice 'first communion' dress. Nevertheless, most people were content with Charro's intervention, not least of all because of the affection they felt towards Allende. Her intervention not only recalled the symbolic significance of the ex-president but also, by means of the shouting, enabled an emotional release in what had become a highly charged event. This was of special importance when we consider that most people were

fully aware that they were walking a thin line between the illegal and what they could get away with.

There is a sensation in the event of 'now you see it - now you don't', 'now political, now religious' which becomes a kind of pedagogical device with suggestions of: this is the way things are, this is the way things could be. This brings to mind Leví-Strauss' description of the shamanistic ritual over the sick woman where change is achieved through a rapid oscillation between mythical and physiological themes: "as if to abolish in the mind of the sick woman the distinction which separates them, and to make it impossible to differentiate their respective attributes" (Leví-Strauss, 1963: 193). In the incident I describe, the group would replace the woman and, I would suggest, the language of Liberation Theology that of the shaman "which makes it possible to undergo in an ordered and intelligible form a real experience that would otherwise be chaotic and inexpressible" (Leví-Strauss 1963: 198). A powerful imagery comes into action in this situation and provides the means for the re-interpretation of its meaning and thus the possibility of proceeding towards its transformation.

I intend to explore the influence of Liberation Theology elsewhere but at this point I would suggest that as its influence 'leaks' into a 'liberation religious practice' its function becomes one of introducing new images into the repertoire of resources available. The image of a God who is an arbitrary judge or a God who is a kind of celestial Santa Claus, is replaced by an image of a liberating God who stands in solidarity with the poor and the oppressed in their struggle for a better world (Gutierrez, 1974; Boff, 1986). The cultural text of this theology functions by varying the signs originally employed, and through this expansion of the sign system, the situation is invested with a wider semantic capacity than was originally the case (Schreiter 1986:80). This wider capacity becomes operative in the context of the procession, providing a language pregnant with metaphor and images that are emotionally charged and which motivate people to action. As Susan K. Langer says, in discussing the roots of myth, "Language, in its literal capacity, is a stiff and conventional medium, unadapted to the expression of genuinely new ideas, which usually have to break in upon the mind through some great and bewildering metaphor" (Langer 1951: 173; Kuhn 1970).

In emphasising the metaphorical I do not wish to suggest that it is simply a cognitive device where we can come to understand one thing by considering it in terms of another (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). I understand metaphor not just as a re-description in other terms, not just as an expansion, but as exploration. It is to step into new territory with an old problem in search of fresh solutions. As Campbell says: "Metaphor is the most productive example of how we, in our thought and language, escape the tyranny of logic and distinctions and categories, and where we can see the processes of a more creative mode" (1989: 109). Furthermore, as Fernandez argues, the images that we use about ourselves affect the way we behave and become organising or performative metaphors (1986:7).

The procession was an event constituted as a ceremony around the theological imagery of life and death, a theme not unfamiliar with the participating Catholic of the local Community. Thus, the imagery of movement, that is from death to life, would equally be familiar. Therefore, we might understand the occasion as a representing a dual exploration of movement: the one between the images implicated in the metaphors of transition from life to death and death to life, and the other the movement through the streets towards the wasteland. Indeed the latter becomes a metaphor for the former in the sense that the movement through life to death and from death to life is 'as if it were a journey'. As a journey many events intervene, many challenges have to be faced, a process takes place through the passage of time, new people encountered, friends are made, and enemies. Change is a journey.

Life and death, however, are the key images at work. The fact is that the focus of the ceremony was about an event where, in concrete and decidedly non-metaphorical terms, lives were ended and death became a violent reality. But death is also a metaphor for life insofar as it implies a quality of existence. Fear is also 'as if' death because the possibilities of a quality of life are prohibited, denied, destroyed. If fear and death can be made to enter the domains each of the other, then to overcome fear is to overcome death, and to overcome death is to have a different view on the quality of life. The movement between these domains of understanding, however, can never be simply cognitive, fear was the consequences of the use of political power, its defeat implied a political process of danger, of subjects becoming empowered to act. (Fernandez, 1986:39-43). As Fernandez goes on to say:

> Through such ceremonial scenes, men become the metaphor predicated upon them. It follows from this view that no successful ritual can permit the exit of its participants until the set of ceremonial scenes has achieved the approximation of the subject to the metaphor- until the subject has achieved the movement in quality space implied by that metaphor (1986:43).

Metaphor, of course, should not be understand as a mechanism aimed at achieving certain concrete ends. To metaphorise (and to behave accordingly) is not to imply a temporary taking leave the of 'real' in order to explore it in another domain before returning with new insights. It is also to recognize that the 'real' itself is also composed of previous, probably taken for granted, metaphors (Richards 1936:108-109, Johnson, 1987:69).

For Black also, metaphor is more than mere comparison between the properties of one 'thing' with another, it implies the interaction of the entire system represented by each of the terms (Black, 1977:431-457). In this sense metaphors such as the ones we see active in the procession 'fear is death', 'life is a journey', 'death is the doorway to life', become exploratory metaphors simply because of their possibilities to examine systems in interaction. They are the process which stretch way beyond the single event of that day and become operative images throughout the years ahead.

In the procession we find an example of how religious imagery is used to explore new ways of moving forward and confronting the problems facing the people at that time. Geertz, referring to a similar theme, uses the Navaho Sing as an example:

> Clearly, the symbolism of the sing focuses upon the problem of human suffering and attempts to cope with it by placing it in a meaningful context, providing a mode of action through which it can be expressed, being expressed understood, and being understood, endured. The sustaining effect of the sing. . . . rests ultimately on its ability to give the stricken person a vocabulary in terms of which to grasp the nature of his distress and relate it to the wider world (Geertz 1973: 105).

This reflects much of what can be observed in the procession. The events in the *población* reveal the religious and the political in a dialogical relationship, challenging and changing the language and imagery each of the other. The religious here does not maintain a conservative, fixed mode of interpretation,

but itself experiences a transformation. In this sense we are in the presence, not only of the explanation and incorporation of suffering, but a movement towards the confrontation with the cause, and with the, as yet, implicit objective of defeating this in political terms.

To speak of a political state of affairs in the language and imagery of religion adds no new information, but it does create the context for the emergence of new ideas and insights, of new objectives and motives. In the same way, to speak of religion in political language and images makes a similar demand upon the imagination, as religious concerns are seen in a new perspective with perhaps more concrete objectives and another set of motivating factors. In the procession there is a dialectic at work, moving between political language and images and those of the religious, each becoming a metaphor for the other: now focus, now frame (Black 1962). The point of closure is in the action that emerges from the reflection, and in the clarity achieved concerning the objectives of that action. In our observation of the events of the procession we are breaking into a hermeneutic circle, taking a 'snapshot' of the process at that particular moment. But the process moves on.

CONCLUSION

The images at play on that day emerged in a dynamic juxtaposition, creating not just alternative readings of the cultural text, but new operative images around which people could organise themselves and propose new kinds of action.

The procession serves in the production of new "symbolic equipment" (Cohen 1985: 16), tools for a task: to think with, to act with, to argue and persuade with; they are weapons in the armoury, tools in the work place of the creation and recreation of worlds. The task facing many of the participants in the procession was to take the first few faltering steps in a process. It was the beginning of an attempt to regain a voice, the power of decision over important parts of their lives.

The following day, however, was just an ordinary day. The confusions and the fears had not disappeared. The mystique around the field of the executed had not significantly dissipated. A new militancy among the *pobladores* had not emerged. A certain process among some participants would eventually begin to gain momentum, but this was to prove to be a longer and more

arduous journey. New operative images were evoked, a more incisive language articulated, a clear form of action suggested. But there was much to be done over the following years if what was intimated in the procession was to develop into a real challenge to military rule.

However, a model for future action was beginning to suggest itself. A model which recognized the importance of diverse groups working together, where alternative images and language coincided, if not quite amalgamated. A model where the movement of bodies through space, threading a way through the streets of the *población*, became an object lesson in the use of ambiguity as a political tool, and an invitation to others, gazing upon this spectacle, to follow. It was as much a pedagogical device as an overt political act. Most importantly, however, it was a demonstration that ordinary people, in an ordinary place were not condemned to be mere objects of social and cultural forces but, rather, were protagonists; actors in a drama that entertained, educated, explored, exposed and transformed; subjects in the creation of new cultural texts.

The equations of power had not altered fundamentally. However, the authorities might well have taken note of this event, and similar events in other *poblaciones*, because the seeds of the end of Pinochet's rule were planted here. Seeds which are invisible to the eye that views physical might as the main arbiter of power. For the oppressor brute force is the instrument of rule and fear is the product it fashions. When fear is conquered the end is only a matter of time.

CHAPTER 3
THE SAUCEPAN PROTEST

I
THE MOVEMENT TOWARDS CONFRONTATION

FROM DESK TO HOUSE

At 7.30 in the evening it was already dark as I sat at the enormous oak desk (mysteriously "liberated" from an office in the centre of town some years previously) which took up half of the already cramped space which served as my sitting room and office. The desk was my own personal symbol, not of authority, having been pointed firmly at the wall to prevent my having to 'interview' people across its vastness, but of my desire to wrest order out of chaos. Volumes of paper stretched across its surface broken only by the 'Grundig' radio constantly tuned into the Church supported radio station: *Radio Co-operativa*, the only radio station not completely controlled by the government (although in fact it was forced to exercise self censorship). Late at night my little 'Grundig' would be tuned into the BBC World Service and then later to *Radio Moscú* (direct from Moscow). More information about what was happening in Chile was gleaned from these two sources than all of the Chilean media put together.

On the particular night in question I was catching up on some of the mountain of paperwork which is an inescapable part of life in Chile where procedure is everything. *El timbre* (rubber stamp) is one of the most important symbols of bureaucratic correctness at all levels of Chilean Society. Even in the *poblaciones*, whenever a group is formed, no matter how few the number of participants or innocuous its activity, the first meeting will inevitably give high priority to the acquisition of *el timbre*, ceding importance only to the selection of an appropriate name for the group and the election of a plethora of officials. *El timbre* is a source of great pride and represents the official existence of the group (a group without its *timbre* would hardly be a serious enterprise). Its keeper is endowed with authority. The mere stamping of a document by that person is a solemn pledge of the whole group.

Whenever anyone died in the *población* an *ad hoc* group of women would form to make the rounds of every household collecting money for the funeral expenses. Being *ad hoc* they would have no *timbre* of their own and, to be official and accepted by the *pobladores*, they would need a paper stating their purpose stamped by an important organisation. Depending on the makeup of the group of women this could be from the *Centro de Madres*, a government sponsored organisation made up of certain pro-government women (the overall organisation was headed by Pinochet's wife) or, more commonly, they would come to me as holder of the official *timbre* of the *Comunidad* (the Church). Occasionally they might also approach *el Club Deportivo*, the local football club which was often a neutral body of men interested in sport but in other places might also be a politically controlled group ranging from *Pinochetistas* (supporters of Pinochet) to supporters of the Communist Party or groups like *El MIR* (an international Marxist revolutionary party). In any case, it would be inconceivable that a collection at the level of the *población* would take place without a document bearing an official stamp, that would meticulously record the contribution of each household. Since I was the guardian of the stamp, the money collected would be counted in my presence. I would have to add up the figures and sign next to the final amount, stamping the document a second time. All precautions were taken against accusations of fraud. I must say in all my years in the *población* I never heard of an accusation being made against any of these informally constituted groups of women.

No document has official existence without a stamp. Its use is part of the indispensable skill of being able to *hacer los tramites* (to negotiate the bureaucratic labyrinth). At local government level it would not be unusual for a person to be passed on from office to office in search of a response to a problem only to end up at the very office where the process had begun in the first place and where attention would now be forthcoming and efficient. The only difference between the first and subsequent visits was that on the 'pilgrimage' *un timbre* would have appeared on some of the documents.

It was possible, of course, to speed up the process but not as you might suspect by the pressing of a banknote into a hand. Any attempt at bribery in Chilean bureaucracy would be dealt with severely. Even the police, who were not averse to the brutalising and even murder of innocent civilians, would be horrified at being offered a bribe. The real trick was to have a *cuña* (literally a

wedge): some influence, usually in the person of a relative or a friend. This would work even better if they owed you a favour. However, even if the *cuña* did not owe you any favour, all would not be lost because by smoothing your path you would now be in their debt; and so the process could continue. As a *cura* I could often have my path smoothed by local bureaucrats who would then proudly proclaim that they had a *cuña en la Iglesia* in *El Padre de Lo Errazuriz*. A fact which *El Padre* spent considerable time and effort trying to negotiate himself out of.

Whatever paperwork I was preparing that evening the process was not being helped by the fact that *La Tatiana*, daughter of the local Communist leader and herself leader of the Young Communists, kept walking in and out of my room in an agitated state. As usual for that time in the evening my house was full of people doing all kinds of things most of which I could only guess at and about which I usually and wisely declined to enquire. Enough trouble came my way without having to seek it out. Most of this human movement came from the room connected to my office/sitting room. This was the original sitting room but which was now public space in the sense that my house was never locked from early morning until at least midnight and was therefore put to use for 'community' activities.

That night however, the tension in the adjoining room was high and the voices unusually subdued. For the umpteenth time *La Tatiana* came in and asked if I thought it was going to be ok. Would the protest work? Would people respond? Of course they would, I replied, without the slightest confidence in my prediction.

FROM HOUSE TO STREET

It was 1983, the year which marked ten years of military rule and for the first time a timid call had come from the political party leaderships for people to demonstrate their opposition to Pinochet and his government. There had, of course, been many acts of protest in previous years, especially around dates like the 1st of May and the 11th of September when many people would attempt to march through the city centre. This was inevitably unsuccessful insofar as the police and military would break up any attempt by groups to form themselves into the seeds of any kind of mass demonstration. Tear gas and shooting were the favoured weapons to instil fear and panic, nevertheless, a large number of people would gather on these occasions,

even if the only outcome was to run around the city centre streets in small groups dodging the police who would be dressed in full riot gear. Special care had to be taken to avoid the '*Guanaco*', an armoured vehicle with a mounted water cannon, named after the Andean llama (*huanaco*) with a propensity to spit. Many of the people involved would be those with some commitment to a political organisation through unions, political parties, student or Church organisations.

The events on the main streets of the city centre were always dramatic (and even a kind of nervous celebration of confrontation) but the political impact was minimal insofar as the government always announced a ban on any march or mass demonstration, and by vigorous policing showed that it could enforce its will. Perversely the attempted demonstrations actually appeared to serve the Governments interests rather well. On the one hand they could show that they had complete control and yet on the other that a military presence in the political life of the country was still needed because of these "elements who had learned nothing from the past and who wished to drag Chile back into the chaos of the Unidad Popular". It was important for the government to emphasise this last point, hence, far from discouraging the showing of images of the demonstrations, through its control of the media, they in fact delighted in showed them in graphic detail.

From the perspective of the demonstrators these events might appear to be self defeating and in terms of immediate political impact this was clearly the case. Indeed these city centre protests around the 1st of May were eventually abandoned and replaced by mass meetings in large indoor sports venues which, although safer, not unexpectedly lacked the vitality and excitement of the street demonstrations. As a result these events tended to have an energy sapping effect on the people.

It is difficult to decide whether moving the scene of action from the street to the enclosed meeting was a failure on the part of the political organisations to appreciate the symbolic importance of the confrontation against military control or a fear that they might lose control insofar as these events often tended to be spontaneous and creative actions of the people operating without the political direction of the parties. However, this type of direct confrontation, although politically naive in the sense that it offered little possibility of leading to the overthrow of a regime backed by what has been

described as the last Prussian army in the world (referring to its rigid discipline and hierarchical control), was nevertheless important as an opportunity for people to overcome their fear. This had implications for the organisation of alternative structures of power, especially those in which the people could participate as actors in the political process rather than merely providing the 'muscle' enabling the political elites to exercise this power on their behalf.

It is in this context that the events on that evening of Tatiana's nervous entrances and exits through my room should be understood. For it was on that evening that a new form of national protest had been called by the established (though unlawful) parties. The plan was for the people to show their dissent by the banging pots and pans, a traditional symbol of hunger. During the time of Allende this symbol of protest had been cynically usurped by the 'middle classes' to protest against the left wing policies of the Government of Popular Unity. Whatever the 'middle classes' suffered in Chile during Allende's final months, in 1983 hunger was a daily experience and child malnutrition was a serious problem for many people in the *poblaciones*.

The importance of the call to protest should not be underestimated. After ten years of intimidation and oppression, of violence and abuse, of lies and the cynical manipulation of information, the level of fear amongst the people was high. Except for the kind of incidents to which I have already referred, there had been almost no massive, organised manifestation of protest against the policies and practices of the government. This was to be the first, tentative step on what was hoped would eventually become a larger scale movement.

In political terms the risks were high because if nothing happened it would imply a loss of face not to mention loss of confidence for the opposition. The government's chosen, official response was to treat the call to protest with contempt and not to give it any credence by declaring any special state of siege (a state of emergency was, in any case, permanently in place) nor by enforcing a curfew earlier than the usual one already in force at midnight.

So *La Tatiana's* nervousness was understandable. If the protest was to fail then it would probably take a considerable time to restore enough confidence to attempt anything similar. If it worked, then a log-jam of political activity

would have been broken and there would be at least some hope for future developments.

By a quarter to eight it was obvious that a group was beginning to gather both inside the house and outside as they overflowed into the space leading to the street. As usual, and without any real planning, the meeting place of the Christian Community was to be the focal point of the protest and my house, being the most physical symbol at that time, became the actual venue.

There were about twenty Communists and assorted supporters although it did not pass without notice that none of the leaders were present other than *La Tatiana* herself. I suspect that the local hierarchy had received instructions not to take part for security reasons. The other group present that evening, led by Alvaro, was the one formed by *los jovenes* of the Basic Christian Community. In fact the majority of the people gathering were considered to be *jovenes,* young people, a flexible term which covered anyone from the age of fourteen up to the age of twenty five especially if they were not married. Most of the adults had decided upon their own place in the spectrum that runs between discretion and valour, a position which can only be truly appreciated when one has experienced the fear induced by the murder and disappearances of people merely suspected of political opposition and which had been the shadow hanging over political action since the military '*pronunciamiento*' of 1973.

So the gathering group, half in and half out of the house, numbered merely forty or so young people all of them answering the call to protest. The idea was for people to bang their pans, just for a few moments, at eight o'clock in the evening. This was a 'lowest common denominator' kind of protest in the sense that people could do it from within their own homes if they wished, with windows open if they dared, hanging out of the windows if they were brave, standing in the street if they were reckless, and marching through the streets if they had abandoned all instinct of survival. With the frustration, idealism and impetuousness of youth, the Communists and the young people of the CEB had tentatively opted for the latter. Hence *La Tatiana*'s worry about whether it was going to work or not was a preoccupation shared by everyone that evening, including myself.

By this stage, as eight o'clock approached, my attempt to appear cool and collected as I worked at my desk was becoming increasingly strained. Would the protest actually work? Would the planned march actually come off or would fear paralyse the gathering groups? Even if the march did take place, what if the rest of the *población* did not respond? It would be like putting on a play only to have it undermined by lack of an interested audience. But worst of all what if the security forces turned up with the inevitable consequences?

Two minutes to eight. La Tatiana came in again - Would it work? Who could tell!

Eight o'clock arrived. Nothing. No sound, no movement, no *Tatiana*. One minute past eight, still no sound was to be heard, strange in a *población* where the noise of domestic life is the constant, background hum. Even the barking of the dogs was silent. My hearing stretched out towards more distant *poblaciones*, but no sound of pots being banged.

FROM STREET TO *POBLACION*

Perhaps it was the usual arrogance of the *gringo*; or maybe the practiced, paternalism of being the priest, or simply my own bloody minded rage at the unfairness of it all, when, and much to my own surprise, I put down the pen which had, in any case, ceased to write anything that made sense ten minutes previously, went to my kitchen, picked up a pan and serving spoon and without saying a word walked into the street and started to bang it furiously. It worked. Forty people suddenly produced their own implements and a tremendous cacophony erupted into the night. Joy and protest combined momentarily, seeming to drown out the fear and pain of ten years of cruelty and injustice. It was one of the most beautiful sounds I had ever heard.

One of my neighbours chose this moment to decide to join in as he shouted from the safety of his own house: *"Callense huevones"*: "Shut up you stupid bastards". Not the support we were looking for; but nobody cared. This was sheer joy. Finally *La Tatiana* found her voice, "Let's go". And off we went on a pilgrimage of protest through the streets of the *población*, snaking in and out of the narrow streets banging away. We were a protest march, a demonstration, a movement, a beginning.

Subsequent developments over the following years were going to place all of this into a different perspective; but this was our moment and one that would never be forgotten; one of those events that would be told and retold for years and, even if stories do improve with the telling, the lives of many of those bangers of pots and pans would never be the same again. I say pot and pans but half way on our march through the *población* I realised, as my spoon began to take on the shape of an *avant gard* sculpture and my good pan began to take on the appearance of a model of the lunar surface, that I was the only one banging a real pan. Everyone else had the sense not ruin a perfectly good and expensive kitchen utensil and so had brought large empty cans and sticks. Only enthusiastic *gringos* take these things literally.

The march took about twenty minutes as we made our way along the dirt roads past the ramshackle assortment of wood, brick, cardboard, and corrugated iron that formed the 'architecture' of the *población*. We banged at our 'pots and pans' as if a ritual, driving away the spirits of fear that had hovered over the people for too long. As the journey proceeded *La Tatiana* or *Alvaro* started the chant usually heard only in church liturgies and meetings held behind closed doors. But now, for the first time in ten years, it emerged into the streets of the *barrio*, if not in the full light of day then into the darkness of the night; a beacon of light, a shout of defiance, a call to courage: *Pan, Trabajo, Justicia y Libertad; Pan, Trabajo, Justicia y Libertad*; Bread, Work, Justice and Freedom. Confidence began to grow and that other shout suddenly emerged, upping the stakes in the explicitness of the meaning of the event; it was the call of the defeated Unidad Popular: *El Pueblo unido jamás será vencido*; *El Pueblo unido jamás será vencido*; the people united will never be defeated.

On that march through the night we picked up about twenty or so other demonstrators who crept from their houses as the group passed by. Occasionally others could be heard hammering away from the safety of their homes. After twenty minutes or so we finally arrived back at the house after an uneventful march. It was agreed that for security reasons everyone should immediately disperse and go home. In the silence that followed the faint sound of pots being banged could be heard from a distant *población*.

II

CROSSING THE THRESHOLD BETWEEN SAFETY AND DANGER

THE THRESHOLD

In the events of that night of protest a motif of movement between worlds began to emerge, given greater emphasis perhaps by the comings and goings of *La Tatiana*. The nervousness she betrayed and the anxiety she conveyed were expressions of a tension and with good reason. An act of cultural transformation was about to take place, one of those moments when, by a movement of the imagination, by an act of will (or perhaps wilfulness), one thing was to be transformed into another; a state of affairs changed beyond recognition.

Entering the house, Tatiana sought reassurance about the events which were about to unfold. Reassured, she went out into the street but, once again, the doubts and fears began to overwhelm; again she came in for reassurance. As she moved between house and street a threshold was crossed; on the one side a certain feeling of security, on the other doubt and danger. On one side there was the relative safety of the house, a democratic space, a place where political discussion, education, planning, wishing, hoping, even certain kinds of symbolic action were all allowed; and where the prying eyes and ears of the authorities were excluded. On the other side there was the danger of the street, made so by the imminent, threatened 'leakage' of these practices into its space. The crossing from the house to the street on that night was, by definition, an act of courage.

We can see implicitly in Tatiana's anxiety what was already explicit in the demonstrations in the city centre, that in the stepping from the house into the street a challenge was being laid down, an act of re-occupation taking place. However, it is one thing to play out this re-occupation in the city, with people fleeing the police through the streets that joined government offices and buildings of state, it is quite another thing to struggle for possession of the streets that lie outside one's own door. Here, in the shared intimacy of spaces, there is an added and important danger; because while the hope was that the free space might expand and take over the oppressive, there was the equal possibility that the oppressive might expand to fill the only private space

left, the only place where people had some power of decision over their lives - the home.

In fact, it should be noted that the threshold (*umbral*) of *Tatiana's* anxieties was in fact quite firmly and physically represented by a striking feature of almost every *población* household which was the inevitable fence (*las rejas*) which surrounds the *sitio* (plot) upon which each house is constructed (Robben 1989:575). This fence might only be a simple wooden affair, although the ideal would always be for wrought iron fencing. Indeed, so important was the fence that many households would ensure that any money available for construction was spent on this project before any improvement to the house.

The conventions for passing beyond the fence were strictly adhered to. No-one simply opened the gate and walked in, this would be permitted only to the closest of friends. All others would have to go through the ritual, repeated a thousand times a day, in order to gain entrance: The gate would usually be rattled or hit either with the hand or with another object like a stone while, at the same time, the person seeking entry shouts *halo*! (the first syllable being stretched and the second short 'haaa-lo'). This would go on until it elicited a response. If there was no answer then it would not be uncommon for the person to continue for up to ten minutes simply banging away and shouting, the assumption being that a household is rarely left unattended. When someone in the house finally responded, the caller would take the initiative, usually with the phrase *Hola*! (each syllable is pronounced in short and equal sounds) *Buenos días Sra. Blanca* (or whatever the name is). The invitation to enter is then given: *Hola Sr. Equis! pasa no mas*! (just come in) but said in a tone that implies: 'What on earth are you standing there for? Come in'. On entering the *sitio* the visitor must say: *permiso* (permission), and if entering the house must repeat this. The ritual for the crossing of the domestic threshold rarely varied.

The importance given to *las rejas* around the sitio is really only found in the *poblaciones*. In the kind of poor housing (often called *conventillos*) in the inner city, as well as the more middle class houses, whether in the inner city or in the middle class barrios, the importance of fencing is less prominent. In the case of inner city housing, both poor and middle class, the likelihood is that the front door will open directly onto the street. In the case of the houses

in the middle class barrios, although there will commonly be a short fence and gate, there will often also be a front door bell. Here it is much more acceptable to pass through the gate and go directly to the front door. Vendors, often coming from the *poblaciones* however, might still prefer to shout from the street. However, the inner city, middle class house, although bereft of fencing is structured in such a way which emphasises the fact that it is a private world. Constructed in the Hispanic manner it would, in the description of Jean Franco:

> 'Traditionally be built around two or more patios, the windows onto the street being shuttered or barred. Inside the patios with their plants and singing birds represented an oasis, a domestic replica of the perfumed garden'. (Franco, 1985)

The importance of *las rejas* in the poor peripheral *barrios* is possibly found in the fact that the *poblaciones* were often founded as a result of *tomas de terreno* (an invasion and taking of land) (Harding & Satterthwaite 1989:12-36). In the past these *tomas* were organised by political parties and consisted of a mass occupation of a piece of land not apparently being used for anything else. In the case of *Lo Errazuriz* the land was originally a vineyard which had been abandoned. As a result each *sitio* had two or three, fruit bearing grape-vines. This method of solving housing problems was not practised for many years under military rule and when it was introduced again it was more as a form of protest and, therefore, while having politically symbolic significance it was not a practical response to the severe housing needs of the poorer section of the population.

The boundary markers placed between each *sitio* during the early stages of the *toma* quickly became reinforced as fencing, emphatically defining ownership. There is no reason, therefore, to overemphasise the significance of the boundary marking the distinction between street and household in terms of a separation from the immanent evil or enduring pollution present in the street as in the Brazilian example which Robben describes (Robben 1989:575). In the Chilean case the divide is more concerned with protection from the invasion of privacy. The fragile construction of the *población* housing renders the home vulnerable in comparison to the inner city's more solid constructions (the poorer examples of which, nevertheless, provide much worse housing conditions than even the *población*). Secure fencing is, therefore, a cheaper and quicker way of creating at least a semblance of

security, and quickly takes on the function of the outer limits which separate the private from the public, and the 'mine' from the 'yours'.

THE STREET

People crossed this same divide every day without giving it much thought. The street in the ordinary routine of daily life was the place where people would queue to buy freshly cooked bread twice a day (an opportunity to catch up on the gossip); the place where they must be seen caring for and watering the inevitable trees which every 'decent' household would have in front of the house (out in the street); the place where the daily sweeping and hosing down of the area of pavement immediately outside the house (Robben, 1989:575) is a public act which demonstrates that yours is not a family *cochina* (dirty).

The house is private - the street is public space. This, in part, explains that voice in the night which shouted that most Chilean of expressions: *"callense huevones*". An expression perhaps that not only were we risking bringing close to his door the worst that the streets represented that night, but also the fact that the street was shared space, public space, as much his as ours, and we were engaged in activities that he had not only not agreed upon, but more specifically, did not want.

That night on the ordinary streets of bread and trees; of sweeping, watering, gossiping; of attending to the everyday tasks demanded by the social world (Robben, 1989:571) a transformation of meaning was to occur and the streets were to become imbued with a special significance. For the rest of that night they were to cease being the space for daily routine and were to become transformed into an arena of more global significance - a representation of that space invaded and controlled by the military government of Augusto Pinochet. By a movement of the mind the street that night was to be transformed into the place where, in the expressions of current political and theological discourse, 'the aspirations of a life without fear, of a life without the domination of the few over the many, of a life where children can be fed, health assured and employment found', were to be played out in the actual stepping over the threshold. The movement of the mind became a physical reality and the streets - a battleground - the place where the struggle between the democratic and the despotic for domination of that space was about to occur.

The scene for this transformation of meaning, this metaphorical shift, had already been set during the previous Sunday liturgy of the Comunidad Cristiana. The Sunday service (*La Misa*) was itself a space which moved, to and fro, as we have seen previously, between religious and political themes, the images of one complementing and transforming the other. An example of this process in the Sunday liturgy can be found in the opening section of the central movement of the service, the Eucharistic prayer:

> *Sí, Padre, saldremos a las calles nuevamente,*
> *y habitaremos las ciudades liberades,*
> *engalanadas de banderas y de globos,*
> *hechas plazas de amor y de concordia.*
>
> *Vendremos del desierto y de la estepa,*
> *olvidando la clandestinidad y el monte;*
> *habitaremos los jardines y los ríos,*
> *el cielo, el mar y el horizonte*
>
> *Retomarán los hombres y los libros*
> *que expulsaron pasiones desatadas;*
> *se formarán corrillos en las calles*
> *reconstruyendo la casa abandonada.*
>
> *Los niños jugarán con las serpientes*
> *y botarán barcos de papel en los estanques;*
> *el lobo y el cordero comerán juntos*
> *y no habrá quien obedezca, ni quien mande.*
> *Se cegarán de luz los ciegos y de fuerza los humildes.*
>
> *Ya surgen los profetas que escriben en paredes y murales:*
> *"No temais, sed valientes, el día está ya*
> *cerca, la ira del amor se ha desatado, vivan*
> *los hijos de los pobres,*
> *muera la tierra sin lumbre ni canciones".*
>
> *Los ritmos de las gentes que buscan un pueblo liberado, resuenan como un eco por los montes,*
> *en un revuelo de himnos y de cantos.*
> (Burgaleta, 1977)

Yes, Father, we will go out into the streets anew
and occupy the liberated cities,

adorned with balloons and flags,
made *plazas* of love and harmony

We will come from the desert and the steppes,
forgetting the secrecy and the mountain;
we will occupy the gardens and the rivers,
the sky, the sea and the horizon.

The people and the books which
unleashed passions will return;
in the street the groups will form
and rebuild the abandoned house.

Children will play with snakes
and sail their paper boats in ponds;
wolf and lamb will eat together
and there will be no-one to obey and no-one who will
give orders.
The blind will be filled with light and the humble
filled with power.

Now the prophets will emerge who write on walls and
murals: "Do not be afraid, be brave, the day is at hand,
the anger of love has been unleashed, long
live the children of the poor,
death to the earth without fire or song".

The rhythms of the people who seek the
liberated city resound like an echo in the
mountains, in a commotion of hymns and songs
(My translation)

Although I will deal more fully with the question of religion later, I give this quotation from the Sunday ritual at this point to illustrate how eschatological images of the liberation of public space is a powerful metaphor in Latin American Liberation Theology. On that particular Sunday the use of these images, made more explicit in the period of free discussion between the congregation and the priest, was also a means of sacralizing the proposed protest. Once again we see an important function of the (Popular) Catholic Church at that time of military rule, attempting, by means of ritual, the transformation of a political (and therefore secular and mundane) act into one that is sacred.

This sanctifying of the political is of course a universal theme that has always been present in the Christian Church. The difference in the context we are

examining here is that it is no longer the traditional blessing of the *status quo* but rather the novelty of a blessing of actions that imply its defeat. At this local level this event was also the opportunity not only to encourage people to demonstrate their opposition later in the week but also to send a coded signal to the Communist Party, who always sent representatives to the *Misa* every Sunday, that the Community was throwing its hat into the ring of protest.

The choice of the street then, as the place for political struggle belies any notion that this space is merely a passageway, a conduit between destinations (Levitas, 1978:228). The streets in *Lo Errazuriz* were simply dirt roads which meant that in summer the afternoon breeze from the mountains would sweep up clouds of dust and deposit it as a fine film inside each house. This was a serious health risk especially for children and older people and the cause for endemic bronchial illnesses. In the heavy rain of winter the streets would become quagmires impossible to cross without picking up great quantities of mud. Passing traffic would leave ruts that would eventually be baked into permanent scars by the summer sun. The streets which were formed on an incline would be transformed into streams running into the unfortunate houses below which, unless they managed to keep an adequate trench open to divert the flow, ran the constant risk of flooding. The dirt streets were a symbol of the poverty of the *población* and it was considered to be an improvement in status to live in one of the few *barrios* which the government had paved, even though economically there was no difference at all.

There is nothing romantic about street life in a *población* and the idea that I have heard expressed that in the shanty towns the street is an extension of the living room, in my opinion is not applicable to Chile. Although there are rules about the responsibilities that a family has towards the upkeep of the street, nevertheless, no matter how crowded the house (and most of them were extremely crowded), the street is not for living in. I know of only one example in *Lo Errazuriz* where a family had a bench outside the gate. In this case the mother and the older daughters would often sit outside and watch the world go by; but these were known by everyone to be the most 'gossipy' family in the neighbourhood (see Hirschon, 1993:81). The real extension to the living room would be the *sitio* itself which would often also be either an extension of (or the only place for) the kitchen. The streets were the play area of the children, the socializing space for *los jovenes* (Whyte, 1961), the street

corners - the symbolic terrain of *los patos malos* (literally: 'bad duck' meaning a bad person, a thief, a mugger) and *los volados* (drug addicts). To say that someone is *muy callejero* (someone who spends a lot of time in the street) is not a complement.

The choice of the street as the place of *la lucha* (the struggle) for freedom would appear to have two levels of meaning (at least in the *población*). In the first place is its character as public space. Whoever controls that domain controls the destiny of the Nation. In the second place the public space of the street controlled by the government of Pinochet, was immediately outside the private boundary of *las rejas* and was uncomfortably close. To establish some control of the street was to push the boundaries further back, perhaps to the point of coinciding with the very boundaries of the *población* itself. Even if this did not end the rule of the military it would keep them at arms length.

Of course, events were to prove that neither of these was a real possibility; but at this point, as the protest began, many wondered and hoped.

THE HOUSE

Las Rejas form the dividing line between house and street, but not simply like a line scratched into the sand, but rather as an embracing demarcation, a boundedness that separates the 'individuality' of the household from the demands, constraints and dangers of the society in general. *Las Rejas*, with the accompanying ritual for passing through them, are an expression of control. No matter what is happening in the wider community or society the family members that form the household can, as far as possible, control both their involvement in wider social life and its ability to invade their space (see Cohen, 1987:209-210). A common expression used as a verbal badge of propriety and correctness, an ideal of social existence was: *"Yo soy tranquilo. No me meto en nada"* (I am a quiet person, I don't get mixed up in anything) (see Timmerman, 1987:3-4). The household nestled within *las rejas* can be seen as the bunker of the poor, a refuge from the dangers and pressures of life, the place to settle down and wait for the siege to be lifted; it is a refuge - a sanctuary (Franco, 1985). The bounded household is a spatial expression of the individual's relationship with the rest of society - 'whatever is going on out there don't simply assume that I am part of it. I can turn my back on the world'.

Jean Franco suggests that this sense of refuge has a feminine and a sacred quality (1985:416). The mother, *la madre, la dueña de casa*, is a figure who receives almost worshipful respect from her children, even when adults. To insult someone with *un garabato* (a curse) is almost always best achieved when mediated through the mother: *Concha tu madre* or *Pucha (Puta) tu madre* (your mother is a whore). The mother figure is idealised to represent succour, refuge, sanctuary despite the pretensions of the father who claims: *Soy yo el que manda aqui* (I am the one in charge here) with the only too common attitude of *machismo* (manliness in the sense of NOT being female- see Change, 1981:6) and the violence that too often accompanies this.

The injustices of the outside are thus replicated within the household with the woman forced to shoulder the burden of creating a human environment without adequate resources while the man acts out the power relations of which he is a victim on the outside and perpetrator on the inside (Freire, 1970:28-32; Leacock,1981:311). In this sense the home as refuge is already a failed paradigm. Yet paradoxically, perhaps, its character of a place of safety and retreat nevertheless, functions even as a consequence of this reproduction of external injustice. The woman in the Chilean context is similar to that whom Lomnitz describes in her study of a barriada of Mexico where she points out that the role of the woman is identified with the capacity to suffer, a role which is learnt from an early age. She must learn to serve her father without questioning while at the same time playing with the younger brothers, tolerating their capricious behaviour. She learns, in this way, to care for and manipulate the men and, at the same time to stoically submit herself to the consequences of their irresponsibility. And so 'the woman often develops a powerful personality (capable of enduring suffering) and thus becomes a pillar of her family and of her social world' (Lomnitz, 1975:101).

The home is made a refuge by the mother who suffers to make it so and, as a result, as Leacock comments:

> What could be a centre of preparation for resistance by both sexes is so often instead a confused battleground, in which women have little recourse but to help recreate the conditions of their own oppression (Leacock, 1981:311).

Franco (1985:416) claims that in Latin America this sense of refuge attached to the figure of the mother is also attached to other figures like *La Virgen* (the

virgin as the mother of Jesus). I would agree with her on this point and indeed I would add that it should not be surprising to find that it is women who have the greatest devotion to this figure who they would often address in terms of *'Madre'*, a source of strength and assistance. She, as a mother, understands the suffering of mothers. The hierarchical Catholic Church, on the other hand has tended to seen *la Virgen* as a model of physical purity, unquestioning docility and even servility as the paradigm of womanly virtue (Change, 1981). Franco however, goes on, to include other more unlikely figures who have this image of refuge and sanctuary attached to them - the priest and the nun and by implication the Church. I believe this claim to be rather more contentious insofar as the relationship between people and these official figures of the Catholic Church is often too ambiguous to make such a sweeping claim. However, in the circumstances of Chile during the period we are examining here, this ambiguity tended to resolve itself in the direction she suggests. The Church, at this time, was indeed the only tolerated political body and as a result used its political space and leverage, limited though it was, to act as an umbrella under which other political entities could function in a semi-clandestine way (Change, 1981:15). Together with the fact that the Church was virtually the only organisation capable of sustaining a detailed commentary on the human rights abuses of the Regime, which, if it did not always prevent them, at least meant that the authorities did not have *carte blanche* to simply do whatever they wished, means that, for all practical purposes, the Church (especially the progressive Church) was indeed perceived as refuge and sanctuary.

The home as refuge, understood within this image of the feminine, becomes vulnerable in a more evocative way if this image extends itself into the danger represented by the protest in the streets that night. The possibility that the police and military forces might arrive not only to repress the demonstration in the streets but also to pass through *las rejas*, not by ritual, but rather by brute force, clearly suggests the image of rape.

Tatiana's constant crossing of the threshold was a movement across spaces of many meanings; from the male space now symbolically occupied by the men of military might to the feminine space of the house she appears to act out the process of this threatened rape. She is a woman who is stepping out of this male designated role of bearer of succour and comfort and becoming an active agent who puts this 'male-idealized otherness (the Utopia)' at risk

(Franco, 1985:417); at once both afraid of the rape and deliberately facing up to its dangers (see Feldman, 1991:7).

III
THE CROSSING OF THE FINAL THRESHOLD

THE FOLLOWING DAY

In the end the worries of la Tatiana and everyone else that night proved groundless. The military did not show up in the streets of *Lo Errazuriz*, nor for that matter anywhere in Santiago, or other cities such as Concepción in the south or Antofagasta in the north. The next day the official press, television and radio declared that the protest had not only been a complete failure but demonstrated the people's total lack of support for the '*señores politicos*'- Pinochet's usual sarcastic reference to the opposition leadership. The word 'on the street', however, was different. There had been many protests of the saucepans, and not only in Santiago. Far from being a failure the call to protest, considering that this was the first official protest at a national level had actually been a great success.

However, successful in what sense? The scene that I examined above in terms of the occupation of space and the conflict that this entailed, at the end of the night, had really come to nothing. True, there had been a demonstration in the streets - but only attended by a small group of people. The following day nothing appeared to have changed. The streets were back to normal and still occupied, if one wanted to interpret them in that way, by the military government. No household had been violated, no harm had been done, the *población* had survived without trauma, but neither had the political equation changed. So had there been any point at all to the exercise?

Nevertheless, emboldened by the participation that had been achieved the leadership of the major political parties decided to call another protest in a few weeks time.

THE SECOND PROTEST

On the night of the second protest I arrived back at my house with only fifteen minutes to spare before the 'outbreak of hostilities'. I was amazed at the difference in the attitude amongst the young people gathering not only inside

the house but already, openly and defiantly in the middle of the street. The anxious murmuring of the previous occasion was replaced by a buzz of anticipation.

The overall plan for this second national protest was the same: to beat saucepans as a sign of protest and rejection of the military regime. However, Alvaro, on behalf of the CEB, and La Tatiana, on behalf of the Communists, had been meeting during the intervening weeks with members of their respective groups to fine tune the local protest. It had been decided that Alvaro would lead one group across the railway line to *Los Presidentes* (referred to as the campamento - 'encampment' by the rest of the *población*, a term much disliked by its inhabitants), while Tatiana would lead the other group around the part of the *población* which surrounded the house. Surprisingly a number of adults from both the Community and from the Party had also decided to join the excitement of that night and so the group of protesters was already beginning to grow as eight o'clock approached.

This time there was no hesitation as the distant sound of clattering pans was heard from a neighbouring *población*. At once the whole group began to bang away at their symbolic kitchen implements.

Vámonos! (let's go!) shouted *Tatiana*; and the group split, *los Comunistas* and supporters to the right, *la Comunidad* to the left. *Que te vaya bién*, (good luck - lit: may it go well for you) Alvaro replied. I joined the ones to the right (*sans* pan, *sans* spoon, *sans* everything - I was determined to regain my dignity on this occasion). We marched and banged and shouted. We heard no defamatory shouts about our physical attributes or the morals of our mothers as we made our way down the embankment and across to *Los Presidentes*. This was still no mass protest. The streets were more or less deserted and yet there seemed to be a little more noise coming from this *sitio* and that *sitio* as we made our way through the streets. Occasionally a figure could be seen sliding out of a gate and gently blending into the march. And little by little the line of protesters began to grow: twenty- five, thirty, forty, fifty.

Alvaro and Tatiana had agreed that to split the forces of the protest would enable us to cover more territory in the hope that others might be persuaded to join in. The strategy was risky in the sense that a respectable protest of

forty or so people would look weak when divided into groups of only twenty, but they agreed that it was worth a chance. They had decided that, as each group covered the chosen territory, they would complete a circle and head towards a central point which was the only paved road in the *población* and which ran alongside the dividing railway line.

As our group, now grown to twice its size, approached *el punto* (the meeting place), Alvaro expressed his hope to me that the other group might have picked up people as we had. He was nervous and a little sceptical and so was I. We continued our march; now we were heading directly towards *el punto* and then, much to my amazement insofar as punctuality is not generally a famous trait of Latin Americans, we saw the figure of Tatiana proudly leading a clattering and shouting band of protesters. As the columns approached each other head on we saw that they too had grown in number. The clattering and shouting got louder as the feeling of strength was fed by the sight of each other approaching in the gathering dusk. Alvaro - a general at the head of his army, Tatiana looking proud and magnificent, a Chilean Joan of Arc at the head of her band of warriors, walked directly towards each other as we followed. I almost expected them to crash head on but at the last second they veered - one group to the left the other to the right. The two leaders linked arms as the two groups merged together accompanied by a surge of the most incredible joy (see Willener, 1970: 9, 25). It was a feeling of power, as if we could sweep the world before us. Immediately, as we all turned to march together down to the end of the paved road, the shout went out: *El pueblo unido jamas será vencido, el pueblo unido jamas será vencido.* The atmosphere was electric as the group walked the few yards remaining to the centre of the población.

At this point there was movement from the surrounding *sitios*. Gates began to open and slowly, hesitantly, people began to empty into the street. The group began to chant, jumping up and down in the ritual to be repeated many hundreds of times during the next three years: *Y va a caer, y va a caer* (he's going to fall, he's going to fall - meaning Pinochet). There must have been between two hundred and fifty to three hundred people gathered in that place at this moment, many more standing behind the safety of las rejas - spectators of this carnival of people's power.

Memories were jogged, old sensations returned and *el Flaco* together with Lucho, neither of whom had been on the march, suddenly appeared rolling three enormous tyres and shouting with new found bravery: *a la barricada* (to the barricade) a cheer went up although nobody moved. We watched mesmerised as the intrepid pair walked back up the road toward the narrow bridge that joined one half of the *población* with the other and by extension to the city itself. We watched (and learned) as they stuffed newspaper into the innards of the tyres. Someone close by where we were standing, obviously also practiced in the arts of protest from another time, pushed a bottle of paraffin into Alvaro's hand and with a push sent him running to the pair on the bridge. In seconds the first barricade of Pinochet's regime was blazing defiance on the bridge of *Lo Errazuriz*, its symbolic significance not lost on the witnesses, both public and private, that night.

For a few moments this was free space, liberated space. In the adrenalin charged emotions of that carnival/protest something changed for those of us who watched the, soon to become familiar, thick, black acrid smoke of burning tyres rising into the night sky. The next day, as on the previous occasion, the streets would return to normal and people would go about their daily routine, but for some there was a sensation that the streets occupied by the military had been liberated definitively. Not the streets that would come alive at week-end with the Sunday *feria* (fruit and vegetable market), or the streets which were host to the *marijueneros* or conduit for the schoolchildren dressed neatly in their very Chilean, blue school uniforms, but the most important streets of all - the ones that Pinochet had to control and occupy if he was to succeed: the streets of the mind. On that night, as the bridge burned, he lost.

CHAPTER 4

THE BARRICADE PROTEST

I

FIRST LINES OF DEFENCE

Since that first, tentative banging of saucepans in May 1983 a further nine protests had taken place. Now, as eight o'clock approached, on that pleasant spring evening in October 1984, the eleventh protest was set to take place.

The *población* had taken on its customary, pre-protest air of nervousness. The silence of the deserted streets was punctuated only briefly by a *micro*, the overloaded bus from the city, which drove far too quickly over the bridge, stopping only to disembark the returning workers who rapidly disappeared into the *población* and the safety of their homes. As the bus roared away to complete its last journey of that night it could be seen that most of the side windows were smashed.

At precisely eight o'clock three figures emerged from the shadows; walking at a determined pace towards the bridge. *Eduardo*, *Pablo* and *Jorge*, their identities obscured by scarfs tied around the lower half of their faces, had the first mission of the night. They crossed the bridge at a trot and continued in the direction of the city for about five hundred yards. At this point they began to scatter dozens of *miguelitos* made of two nails each with the head sharpened to form two points. These nails were bent to form right angles and then soldered together at the corners. In this way, no matter how they fell, a point was left sticking upwards, enough to puncture the tyres of most vehicles. This was the first level of defence designed to stop, or at least slow, down any police or military vehicles that might be approaching.

Only a few seconds behind them *Antonio, Juan Carlos, Maria, and El Guaton* quickly crossed to a point ten yards beyond the bridge where they each produced metal stakes about nine inches long, pointed at each end and with a kind of collar around the middle. One point was jabbed into the road, a tube, five inches in length was placed over the top spike which was hit with a heavy hammer, driving the stakes quickly and efficiently into the tarmac. This formed the second level of defence.

Meanwhile the first three had run past them back to the bridge where a group of about forty people had suddenly materialized carrying tyres, old metal bedsteads, an old wheelbarrow and piles of timber which was immediately piled up across the centre of the single track bridge. As the metal stake team finished their task and leaped across the barricade, Alvaro threw petrol over the paper and rag stuffed tyres and Pedro produced the first Molotov cocktail of the night with which to ignite them. This was no primitive petrol bomb consisting merely of a bottle of petrol with a rag in the top. This was a version developed in the sophistication of modern urban resistance. It was a short, screw capped bottle, two thirds filled with petrol one third with sulphuric acid, the cap screwed tightly in place. On the outside of the bottle, and secured with Sellotape, was a tiny envelope containing a chemical used in fertilizer and mixed with the heads of a dozen matches. When the bottle was smashed the effect would be almost immediate. The chemical and the acid would come into contact and create sufficient heat to ignite the match-heads which in turn would ignite the petrol. The result was an instant blaze. That night it took just one to set the barricade burning.

While this was going on *Sam and Miguel* were at work on the walls on either side of the road just behind the bridge. Each of them armed with a spray paint canister was writing a slogan in huge, black letters. By the time the barricade was burning *Sam* had already written the words: *PODER POPULAR* (People Power) and was already helping *Miguel* to finish writing the much longer slogan on the opposite wall: *HABRA PAZ PARA EL PUEBLO O NO HABRA PAZ PARA NADIE* (There will be peace for the people or there will be peace for nobody).

THE GOVERNMENT REACTION

The success of the protests had surprised everyone, including Pinochet. The studied attitude of contempt with which the military government had treated the first protest had given way on the fourth event, in August 1983, to the recognition of the political risks that they represented and, as a result, 18,000 troops were sent into the streets, many of them into the *poblaciones*. Hundreds of people were detained and *relegación* (internal exile) was introduced. This practice enabled the government to by-pass the judiciary which, in any case, was subservient and servile to Pinochet and could, by a simple, executive order, send a detainee to any part of the national territory

for a stipulated period of time which might range from months to years. Those who suffered this punishment were taken under escort to some isolated village or small town either in the hot, dry desert of the north or the damp, cold regions of the south. Having arrived they would simply be left in the middle of town and informed that they could not leave that area for the duration of their sentence. No provisions were made either for housing or subsistence and it was often the local communities which took them under their wings during their enforced stay.

The benefits of this process for the government were many. It got rid of 'trouble-makers' and sent a clear signal to others who might be tempted to protest. At the same time it avoided the more serious international, political and diplomatic repercussions that always accompanied the cases of external exile. It also meant that the detainees were not languishing in jails and therefore becoming the focus for internal and external human rights campaigns. To have to live within the limits of an village or town would hardly appear to be the most brutal example of oppression; after all, in one sense, they enjoyed no less a limitation to freedom of movement than most of the regular inhabitants of these isolated places.

In this the calculation of the government proved correct and although there were indeed campaigns about the injustice of internal exile they mostly lacked the profound sense of injustice directed towards other forms of punishment. The downside for the government, and something which they never took seriously enough, was that these *relegados* often became sources of information to their host communities about what was happening in the major cities and in many cases became an important source of incipient concientization in what otherwise might have remained sleepy, acquiescent backwaters during the years of military rule. Some of these *relegados* suffered further arrests and beatings at the hands of the local authorities for their activities.

Of course, *relegación* was only part of the picture. During the protest of August 1983 the 18,000 troops, trained for war and not for police work, shot and killed 17 people in the act of protest, although, the next day, the government controlled news media unashamedly claimed the number to have been 50. Many more were injured by gun shot. In the subsequent protests, many others were also shot.

THE PREPARATIONS

The events of the day of the eleventh protest had begun at six o'clock in the morning when small groups of no more than three or four had attempted to enforce the, so far, unsuccessful *paro nacional* (general strike) which had been called by the Copper Workers Federation ever since the very first protest. One of the best ways of bringing the major cities to a standstill was to paralyse the privately owned transport system, the lumbering *micro-buses* and the smaller and faster *liebres*, upon which the vast majority of workers depended to get to their places of employment. This task was approached in a number of ways. One was by intimidation - threatening the drivers with the burning of their vehicles (the bus owners insisted that they ignore these threats or lose their jobs). Occasionally a *micro* would be boarded by a team who would order the passengers off at gun point. The vehicle would then be torched. At other times there would be a night raid (usually carried out during curfew) on a bus depot where a number of vehicles would be set ablaze.

The most common attempt to enforce the *paro*, however, was the one employed on that particular day. The early morning teams had been out and about scattering *miguelitos* at various points of the bus route which followed the road around the *población* (see Schneider, 1995:178). Usually the drivers, especially alert and fearful on these days, would keep a keen eye on the roads and whenever they spotted these objects designed to puncture their tyres, would simply stop and pick them up, thus clearing the road for themselves and for the buses which followed. To make the *miguelitos* was a laborious process and one which posed a security risk both in their manufacture and storage and so it was not possible to have an unlimited supply on hand. In Lo Errazuriz another, more efficient, method was developed which ran alongside the scattering of *miguelitos*. In this method a single *miguelito* would be wrapped in a scrap of paper or placed inside discarded pieces of orange peel; a member of the morning team would stand at the bus stop with an apparently innocent, discarded piece of refuse at their feet. As the bus stopped to pick up its passengers the disguised *miguelito* would be surreptitiously kicked under the front or rear wheel. The vehicle would inevitably drive over it as it moved off but the puncture would usually be slow to take effect, the end result being a series of abandoned buses a mile or so down the road, all waiting to have a tyre replaced. On the particular morning in question this task appeared to be more successful than usual and

very few buses had actually managed to complete a full days work (see De la Maza and Garcés, 1985:71).

THE STATE OF READINESS

With the primary defence teams now safely back behind the burning barricade on the bridge, there were still further tasks to be completed. A few went off up *Cerrillos* Street to check that the neighbouring *barrio* had cut off that road, while another group went down the same road to check whether the *poblaciones* lower down had done the same. There would be little point in defending one barricade only to be surprised from the rear. In any case, to be on the safe side, look outs had been posted to report any breakthrough to the bridge so that the *compañeros* would have time to take evasive measures.

That night I accompanied Alvaro, with the second group, to reconnoitre the lower end of the *población*. We had only travelled about a quarter of a mile when, and much to our surprise, we came across a group of *patos malos* (the local villains), who would normally have nothing to do with the protests, defending their own barricade. Piles of rocks and stones at the side showed that they meant business if it came to a fight (not to mention the guns and knifes which were tools of their trade).

El Feo (literally - the ugly one) greeted me - '¡*Hola Padre*! *¿Como le va*?' ('how's it going?'). *El Feo* had declared himself my personal guardian angel in the world of the *patos malos* ever since I had gone out in the curfew to be with his grandfather on his deathbed. '*Vamos a sacar la mierda de los milicos*' (we are going to knock the shit out of the military). '*Bien hecho Juan*' (well done), I replied to El Feo as we moved on past.

Lower down we came to the foot of the Cooperative *El Despertar*, where many of the Communists lived and where we met *La Charro,* together with *Tatiana*, leading a group defending their own barricade constructed in a similar way to the one at the bridge (without the stakes driven into the ground which was the 'signature' of Lo Errazuriz). We did not have a lot to do with each other these days and there was a lot of mistrust between us. However, on these occasions, although there had been little contact at the planning stages, there was a mutual recognition that we at least had to cover each others backs. We stayed and chatted for a few moments.

At this point we turned left and entered the heart of the *población* itself. Here people seemed to feel that it was safer to appear on the street and we encountered many who were standing chatting at the gates of their *sitios*. We caused quite a sensation as we walked in single file through the narrow streets. Each of us were now wearing *gorros* (woollen hats) and with the lower part of our faces covered with red scarfs to obscure our identities from prying eyes. There were *soplones* (informers) and *sapos* (spies) in every *población* who would report every movement to the authorities the next day.

Moving further into the *barrio* we came upon a group of young people, no more than fourteen or fifteen years of age, who had formed a small barricade of their own, although, strategically, it was placed in a useless position. They were having difficulty in getting the tyres to burn, and so Alvaro, producing a molotov, threw it hard against the barricade - In seconds it was ablaze. The young people looked at him in awe. "Put look outs at each end of the street", he advised them, "so that if the *milicos* approach you will know which side of the barricade to be on. Don't stand and fight in the middle of the *población*. Because if they start shooting they will hit people in their homes. Just move around in the shadows '*y hueviarlos*' (mess them about). *Bien hecho compañeros*"(well done). With this benediction their heads visibly lifted with pride.

THE FIELD HOSPITAL

Moving on back towards the bridge it was time to check my house. *La Sñra Mirta, Sra Blanca, Dago, Domingo* and one or two others were manning a veritable field hospital against the chance that someone might be injured. My office/sitting room had been kitted out with a camp bed alongside the spare bed/sofa, and the desk was covered in assorted first aid equipment. *La Mirta* and *Sñra. Blanca* were both leaders of the *Equipo de Salud*, the health team, which was a local initiative of the CEB and which provided emergency first aid, medical advice and health education to the *población*. They themselves had been trained for this task by doctors, nurses and health care specialists which the Catholic Church had organised on a city wide level.

On previous protests this first aid cover had proved to be very necessary. On two occasions people had received gunshot wounds, fortunately not too serious, but which nevertheless, required immediate attention. Many others had received severe beatings after falling into the hands of the military. *La*

Mirta and La Blanca had provided efficient treatment on the spot. That night we found them all nervously awaiting the expected problems of that night.

FIRST CONTACT

Leaving the house we headed for the bridge, now close at hand, but were no sooner on our way when we heard the first shots - a couple of single shots followed by a burst of automatic fire. It had begun. Using the shadows as cover we ran towards the sounds of conflict and, as we came upon the bridge, saw that all hell had broken loose. On the far side was a group of civilians, just a few feet away from the barricade, shooting in our direction. The *compañeros* had taken cover away from the bridge and were firing stones from powerful *hondas* (slingshots using surgical tubing in place of elastic). Two molotovs sailed through the air and landed close by the civilians. They were almost certainly the CNI (the secret police) and so extra care had to be taken not to fall into their hands. It was possible to be permanently 'disappeared' by these people. We immediately noticed that, on this occasion, that they were unaccompanied by the military or the police.

Crawling towards the corner nearest the bridge we came across *Antonio* and *Pedro*. 'Should we throw the grenades?' *Pedro* asked *Alvaro*. This was serious business. Once these were used then the conflict could possibly intensify to catastrophic proportions. The grenades in question were, in fact, home made, consisting of thick metal tubes about three inches in diameter and seven or eight inches long. One end was sealed with a soldered metal plate while the other had a heavy metal cap screwed into place out of which came a fuse. The tube was cut in a crisscross pattern so that it would fragment on detonation. Each tube was packed tight with home made gunpowder (made in vast quantities between protests) as was the fuse which consisted of a thin, rubber tube tightly filled with the same gunpowder. Careful experimentation had discovered the timing of varying lengths of fuse.

THE ARMAMENT FACTORY

As the tone of the protests changed to one of combat rather than complaint it became increasingly necessary to prepare for the next protest almost from the moment of the conclusion of the previous one. As the barricade became the main focus in this new style of protest it became clear that rubber tyres, as *Lucho* and *Flaco* had taught us on that very first occasion, were actually very effective, partly because they burned for a long time, partly because they

created a huge column of thick black smoke which sent out signals of solidarity to distant poblaciones and invitations to combat to any patrolling *milicos*, and all of this with the added advantage of maintaining much of their weight as they were slowly consumed by the flames. This latter was important as it required considerable force to move them during which time the police or military personnel involved were exposed to attack. Another important advantage was the fact that they could be easily hidden and quickly rolled into place. The importance of the tyre as material for the barricade was such that everyone was on a permanent state of alert to spot the abandoned ones or, better, the ones stored in yards and *sitios*. If these were not 'volunteered' then they would be 'liberated' either by stealth or by threat.

The question of igniting the barricade was not too difficult given an ample supply of petrol or paraffin. However, it soon became clear that there was a wealth of knowledge around about methods of urban resistance, especially from people like *Lucho* and *Flaco* who had taken part in the famous *Cordon Cerrillos* (Winn 1986), the factories just a ten minute walk from the *población*, which had become both a source of conflict with Allende as the workers tried to push the socialist reforms further and which then became the only serious, though useless, attempt at opposition to the military coup in 1973. This culture of the workers armed and prepared for revolution, which had never been a realistic possibility, provided many tips for the younger generation to emulate. Another source of information was, of course, the guerrilla culture of Nicaragua and El Salvador which were the dominant models feeding the popular imagination. There were even audio-tapes brought in from these countries which taught people, in song, how to disassemble and re-assemble an AK-47 rifle and how to arm and throw a grenade. The popularity of these tapes was only slightly marred by the fact that nobody in Chile possessed an AK-47 or anything like it (except for the more professionally trained guerrilla groups who were few and spectacularly unsuccessful).

From these different sources the participants in the protests began to learn how to organise barricades, how to take security measures, how to form layers of defence rather than just one line, how to have fall back points, advance intelligence, local intelligence and so on. While many of these measures were completely unnecessary given the nature of the Chilean conflict, nevertheless, attention to this kind of detail had the effect of creating a 'military consciousness', the forward thinking that avoided injury or

detention even if, ultimately, it did not succeed in delivering a mortal blow to the *milicos*. More importantly, it had an impact upon the identity of the protesters, serving symbolically to assist people in the construction of themselves as combatants rather than just, ordinary, 'boring' protesters.

On the more practical side there was a lot of information available about the technology of protest for combat, the most important of which centred around the making of molotov cocktails and explosives. I have already explained the workings of the molotovs, their construction, however, presented a number of difficulties.

The bottles used were usually about the size of a third of a pint. Through trial and error it was discovered that small wine bottles were better than the ones used for mineral waters because the glass was thinner and therefore broke more easily upon contact. This demanded that in the weeks in between the protests, bottles had to be collected which meant that not only were the *compañeros* looking around constantly for tyres but also for bottles (as well as loose bottle caps). As a result a 'scavenging for combat' mentality was soon developed. After a while, as the authorities realised the potential of these artifacts, it became increasingly dangerous to go out and buy petrol with just a petrol can. On more than one occasion people had been stopped for questioning while carrying one of these. The solution was for *Antonio*, who had an old 1950's Ford pick-up, to fill it up at a local filling station and for the *compañeros* to syphon this out for use in the molotovs. The acid was a more risky proposition as it could only be bought from specialist dealers. It was apparently used, or so I was informed, in the treatment of metals. This problem was solved by buying in bulk on behalf of a number of different groups.

The making of these petrol bombs was quite simple once the ingredients were gathered together. However, for the sake of security, the place of assembly was constantly rotated between houses of the *compañeros* (which had to be secure in terms of a lack of visibility from the street, certainty that neighbours were not informers, and that family members were sympathetic). A team of about six would be put in charge of production. Interestingly the men always poured in the petrol and the acid while the women were the ones who usually made up the tiny envelopes filled with the fertilizer and match heads. For all the revolutionary rhetoric and imagery there was still a

replication of the kind of work which is perceived as pertaining to men and that pertaining to women. As far as I am aware, the women never carried either molotovs or grenades into combat.

The production of the grenades was a rather more difficult proposition. To be found manufacturing molotovs was probably to risk a term of imprisonment or internal exile; to be found making explosives risked at least torture, and a long term of imprisonment or possibly even death or disappearance (which was usually the same thing). Nevertheless, gunpowder was produced in vast quantities. Fortunately it was relatively easy and quick to make consisting of a mixture of potassium nitrate (saltpetre) which exists in vast quantities in Chile and was once a major export(especially to the British), sulphur, and charcoal. The first was purchased from outside the city without any difficulty and the last two ingredients were in plentiful supply and could be bought without difficulty.

Once again the mixing of the ingredients in the correct quantities (and as I am not writing a handbook for guerrilla warfare I will not give them here) was organised in the homes of the *compañeros* on a rotating basis. However, the mixing would be done on only one occasion *per* protest and only when there were sufficient tubes. These were made separately by those who had access to the tools for cutting the screw grooves onto the tubes and the caps and who had the equipment for soldering together the finished article. The screw cap was necessary for the obvious reason that it would be impossible to solder it onto a tube packed with gunpowder.

On the day of manufacture everyone was mobilised. Juan, who was in charge of security, organised two rings of *compañeros* around the house, sufficient to give ample warning of any approaching security force. Only at this point would the tubes and the ingredients be brought from their separate locations. On a table in the middle of the room *Alvaro* would measure out the correct quantities while *Ruby and Marcella* would mix it all together. It was a frightening spectacle to see this enormous pile of explosive material in the middle of the *población*. I was assured that it would not explode unless tightly packed and would merely burn if ignited. I was not convinced and invariably opted to absent myself from the process. Everyone, in this case including the women, would pack the gunpowder into the tubes ramming it in as tight as possible. This did not take too long and usually resulted in between thirty and

forty grenades (some of which would be given to other groups in other *poblaciones*). The next task was the most laborious and consisted in packing the gunpowder into the plastic tubes that were to form the fuse. Once this was completed then came the moment to screw the caps on tightly and finally feed the fuse into the hole at the top. Afterwards they would be taken away in bundles of three or four to be hidden in various points around the *población*. Later that same day *Juan* would arrange for the outside distribution. By the evening no trace would remain of the operation.

The *miguelitos* were the easiest objects to make given the fact that quite a few people had welding equipment used for gaining casual work around the city. These were assembled as an on-going process almost daily, with the nails being bent and the head sharpened by the compañeros in their homes before being delivered for welding. Each day *Juan* would organise their distribution and hiding.

Either by luck or good management this veritable armaments factory managed to survive for many months without there being any lapse of security or incident with the security forces. It is notable that in a *población* where there are few secrets this one remained 'in-house' and in my opinion suggests a tacit support on the part of the wider population who chose to avert their gaze (or maybe they just preferred to pretend that it was not happening).

A VICTORY

Should the grenades be used against the civilians at the bridge? Alvaro guessed that the CNI had no back-up and would not want to risk injury by forcing the barricade, after all, they only had a normal car, not the armoured vehicles of the police and military (they had obviously removed the *miguelitos* and metal stakes in their path and we discovered later that this had given the *compañeros* time to take up safe positions), and so he took the decision to use the grenades.

Pedro took out the first - carefully lit the fuse and waited a couple of seconds to make sure that it was burning. He then stood for a brief second and threw it. We watched it arch through the air towards the CNI only to fall next to the barricade on our side. For a few seconds nothing happened and then it exploded with a terrifying bang. At this point the shooting increased in

intensity. Antonio prepared a second grenade which was also thrown. Again it landed on our side only this time to explode immediately (fuse making was not an exact science).

That was enough. A tremendous cheer went up from the hidden *compañeros* as the car carrying the armed civilians screeched into a three point turn and disappeared back towards the city at high speed (only to be ambushed yet again, so we heard later, by another *población* back down the road indignant at the fact that they had earlier got through their barricade in the first place). A quick check proved that no injuries had been sustained on our side.

II

A NEW BOUNDARY

The events of that night still had a number of hours to run before reaching their dramatic conclusion. However, it is obvious that there had been important developments since those tentative movements of the first protest. On that occasion we saw the struggle, typified in the person of La Tatiana, to find sufficient courage to cross the boundary formed by *las rejas*, the iron railings, which were the simultaneous focus of fear and safety, a boundary which had to be crossed if the causes of the fear were to be confronted and eventually overcome. In practical terms the step from the house to the streets was simply a question of a few metres but human space is more than mere calculation of distance or size. In Tatiana's mind, and mirrored in her emotions, it was the most gigantic of steps, passing not just through the iron fencing but through the very barrier of fear and inaction. As Gaston Bachelard commented:

> The problem is not only one of being, it is also a problem of energy and, consequently, of counter-energy. In this dynamic rivalry between house and universe, we are far removed from any reference to simple geometrical forms. A house that has been experienced is not an inert box. Inhabited space transcends geometrical space (1964: 46-47).

And this discloses the paradox because, although the crossing of the boundary can be seen to represent a movement from safety to danger, we should not too quickly assume that the refuge and safety of the house, the inhabited space of Bachelard, must only imply a form of political 'quietism' - a

shutting out the world, a retreat into the womb, (although this did indeed appear to be the case in many households). The house as refuge, in this case, my house which, as Church territory had an assumed immunity from assault by the authorities, and understood as a place which 'transcends geometrical space', was the source of security and strength which might be appropriated, nurtured and developed as personal attributes by the people who inhabited that space. The house and its inhabitants co-existed, as it were, in dialogue about weakness and strength, about fear and courage. Bachelard speaks of this when, referring to Henri Bosco's *Malicroix*, he says:

> From having been a refuge, it has become a redoubt. The thatched cottage becomes a fortified castle for the recluse, who must learn to conquer fear within its walls. And so, faced with the bestial hostility of the storm and the hurricane, the house's virtues of protection and resistance are transposed into human virtues. The house acquires the physical and moral energy of a human body. Such a house as this invites mankind to heroism of cosmic proportions. It is an instrument with which to confront the cosmos. . . Come what may the house helps us to say: I will be an inhabitant of the world, in spite of the world (Bachelard 1964: 46).

The acts of courage on that first protest were not in spite of the seductive safety of the Church house but as a consequence of it. The house, over a number of years, had been the centre of operations, the place of discussion, the focus of learning, of planning and of solidarity amongst those who were to step out into the political storm of the protests. That step, over which Tatiana had suffered so much, was the culmination of those years and the coming to fruition of the images of liberation and struggle which had been the currency of so much internal dialogue and debate. The short step of Tatiana was fuelled by the shared experience which had been quietly taking place over those years, preparing her and the others for their step towards confrontation.

By this eleventh protest, the movement 'into the world' appears to be complete. The ambiguity of the procession to the field of the dead and the tentativeness of the first protest have now given way to a highly disciplined organisation of protest. In the process the focus has moved from the boundary of the railings to that of the barricades and especially the one at the bridge which had emerged in the spontaneity and celebration of the final moments of the second protest. The precarious place of safety was, by

implication, no longer the house but the entire *población*. As Thornton remarks:

> Boundaries are literally imaginary; they consist of images of continuity and closure applied to a continuous reality. Boundaries are communicated in 'practical' acts (eg. scientific survey of the Australian aboriginal 'walkabout', or the Masay ceremony). Once constituted they may be related to human individuals or groups in many ways (Thornton, 1980: 19).

As the *compañeros* set out on their calm and efficient construction of the new boundary its physical form takes on the character of conflict. We can see the various kinds of spiked objects, the total blocking of any kind of access emphasised even more by the flames and acrid smoke, not to mention the explosives waiting to be hurled at any transgressor. This is in contrast to the railings which had taken their character from the need to preserve privacy, the separation from the common life mediated through the streets. The railings, however, would ideally be ornate, nicely painted wherever possible and, of course, provided with a gate. The objective after all was not to prevent access but rather to control it. Boundary, in the sense that we can observe it at work in both these examples, is quite clearly more than a line, however drawn, which merely divides one side from another. The very purpose of the division at work here is expressed symbolically in the manifest form of the boundaries themselves. They describe not only that there is a separation between the two sides but in their actual construction express something about the attitude, purposes and intentions of their builders. For Thornton:

> Territory is the symbolic differentiation of space into a structure of meaning by attributing shared and public values to places, directions, and boundaries such that it may be graphically, cognitively or ritually represented as a coherent and enduring image (1980: 19).

The conviction of the military that they were the rulers and that others needed to merely acquiesce to this self-evident fact, was profoundly disturbed by the events at the bridge. That boundary was constituted by people who were presumed to have no power of decision; it was enforced by people who were assumed to have no power to impose their will, and it was one used as a means for expressing the views of those whose point of view was deemed to be irrelevant. At the bridge there was a clear sign of passivity giving way to intentional action. That new threshold was no longer a barrier to be

surreptitiously crossed, as was observed in the second protest, but an invitation to the security forces to come and do battle for which the barricades served as the beacons indicating where this battle was to take place.

Conflict was no longer an unfortunate consequence of the action but its very purpose. The concern was no longer about what would happen should the security forces come but rather the disappointment if they had stayed away. The enemy had been engaged.

A BOUNDARY-IN-ACTION

In focusing upon the two boundaries, the one around the house, the other around the *población*, which I use to construct an explanation of the protests, it is clear that the barricade/boundary represents an exponential movement not only in terms of the size of territory which is bounded but in the dynamic character of its construction. This boundary, when compared with that of the railings, not only has a palpably more active quality due to the manner and contents of its construction but also due to the fact that the most important element in its formation is the human body itself.

In part, the function of the railings was to regulate the movement of bodies through its space by acting as a physical obstacle to that movement. Passage through it was granted by receiving verbal permission. The barricade also regulated bodily movement through its space, but in this case those who gave or denied permission were themselves a physical part of its formation. If, when wishing to enter a house and finding nobody at home, the caller would never pass beyond the railings but would simply go away. At the barricade the very opposite was the case. Anyone wishing to pass through and finding nobody on guard would feel free to go beyond it, if not without some difficulty then at least with impunity. The presence of persons at the barricade was essential if it was to fulfil its function. An assault by the authorities upon the barricade as an obstacle to their own free movement was one and the same with an assault upon the people that formed an integral part of it. Feldman, commenting upon the situation in Northern Ireland, suggests that:

> Power. . . becomes spatialized. It is contingent on the command of space and the command of those entities that move within politically marked spaces. The body becomes a spatial unit of power, and the distribution of these units in space constructs sites of domination (1991:8).

The movement to the barricade was a redistribution of bodies from their position in space as dictated by Pinochet to new positions of choice - the barricades, which became the places where a challenge to the hegemony of military rule took place. Furthermore, the challenge is not mediated by symbols at a remove from the people whose aspirations they represented, but their very bodies, exposed to the risk of violence and death, become living symbols because these are the ultimate sites of domination where the real struggle for power had to be engaged and won.

The protesters, in effect, placed their bodies between two spaces, that of *el pueblo* (the people) which had now been declared free space, and that of *la dictadura* (the dictatorship) on the other side, space which he clearly and unambiguously dominated and had still to be liberated. The boundary, formed by the protesters was, therefore, more than a marker of enclosure, because it was made up not only by static indicators, like the railings, but was constituted on each occasion as an event involving the organised action of building, fortifying, burning and defending. The boundary established by the barricade was essentially dynamic; it was a boundary-in-action.

Inevitably, however, the spikes would be swept up and removed, the burning tyres would, in the space of a few hours, be reduced to the familiar black ash and wire, the walls inscribed with their subversive messages would be whitewashed for the umpteenth time, the *micro-buses* would come the next morning to carry off those who had jobs to their places of work and everything would return to normal. In other words the sustainability of this level of urban resistance was limited. The power of the military was more than capable of winning a war fought on the terms of physical confrontation, especially when unfettered by the niceties of democratic laws. So what was gained?

A DIDACTIC BOUNDARY

I would suggest that all these events, and the preparations leading up to them, although militaristic in style, should be understood as symbolic rather than as a calculated preparation of intent to cause actual bodily harm. The significance of the barricades was similar to those of the events in Paris in 1968. Willener speaking specifically of their usefulness in that situation says:

> . . . The first barricades were exemplary: they were built not for defensive effectiveness, which was fairly low, but as 'collective action

> in which everyone worked and gave proof of extraordinary imagination'. Subsequent actions were less exemplary, or not at all, since, once it had proved that it was possible to erect barricades in the streets, they were no more than 'defensive instruments in the hands of demonstrators against police charges and not offensive instruments for destroying the bourgeois state'. Every conquest must be usable, must become a springboard for later action'. . . The imagination displayed during the first barricades was therefore interesting in so far as it revealed the strength of the demonstrators both to themselves and to society, and insofar as it led to a 'depassment' (Willener, 1970: 166-167).

Of course the time scale of the two conflicts was quite different. The events of France in 1968 were condensed in comparison to the long drawn out process of protest in Chile. The important point which Willener makes is not whether the barricades proved valuable as defensive or offensive instruments, the fight with the armed civilians at the bridge is ambiguous in these terms, but rather that they reveal something to the demonstrators themselves and to everyone else which is: a '*depassment*' - a way out of the present situation. In other words it was through action, through organisation, through solidarity, through the development of courage that the first steps were taken to present to Pinochet the true barricade to his pretensions to rule by force and fear, which is the barricade of resistance in the minds of a significant number of the people.

However, it should be pointed out that there were certain political groups (not represented in *Lo Errazuriz*) who proposed that the true significance of the protests was found in the growing possibility of a general uprising which would indeed overthrow Pinochet by force. I am very doubtful that even the political hierarchies of such groups (like the MIR and certain revolutionary sections of an otherwise decidedly non revolutionary Communist Party) actually believed this to be possible, nevertheless, the operative images proposed to the grass-roots activists were certainly of this order.

The idea of overthrowing the dictator, like slaying the dragon, is appealing, and most of the protesters, including myself, were seduced by this idea at certain moments. However, there was a growing realisation that this would not prove to be an effective path down which one should travel for too long (Willener, p. 178). The strength of the kind of confrontational approach which I have been describing lies not so much with the revolutionary potential of the

tactics but with the potential to make manifest that the Government of Pinochet was not all powerful while the people were totally powerless. Pinochet could be challenged and furthermore it could be demonstrated quite clearly that he did not enjoy the popular support he pretended (although he did enjoy more than some would care to admit) and that only by repressing rather than convincing the people, could he continue in power. Again we see this kind of analysis reflected in the events of France in 1968:

> In fact - such at least is one of my conclusions - the revolutionary attempt in May was more successful than might appear. Problems that were usually concealed were brought out into the open, discussed, and taken up by a whole body of opinion - numerically small, but situated perhaps in the centre of society's problems. The fact that it did not succeed in bringing about an immediate change in society, or an immediate solution of all the problems raised, cannot be attributed to basic weakness, but to one of tactics (Willener, 1970: 189).

The purpose which the barricades ultimately served was not military but rather didactic. They were, in effect spatial devices, (Feldman, 1991:36) through which a political action was committed.

As a didactic boundary it was directed at various constituencies. There were the *pobladores* seen hurrying home as the hour of protest approached who had yet to make the step beyond the railings and the safety and security they represented. There were those in the background who were supporting the protest by providing encouragement, materials, education and opportunity for debate, discussion and planning and those who, on that night were staffing the first aid post. There were the young, unorganised elements, who emulated by forming their own barricades for their own perceived reasons. Then there were the authorities themselves who were being re-educated about the capacity of the people to tolerate the conditions of life to which they were being subjugated, and about their own capacity to impose their plans with impunity. But most of all the didactic element of the barricade/boundary directed itself at its builders and defenders. Both in its construction and in the crossing beyond the boundary the *compañeros* were learning something about their capacity not only for power but a growing understanding of the complexities and the responsibilities it implied. Political agency, as Feldman, says:

> . . . is not given but achieved on the basis of practices that alter the subject. Political agency is relational. It has no fixed ground - it is the effect of situated practices. Agency is predicated on self-reflexive, interpretive framings of power which are embedded not only in language but in relational sequences of action (1991: 1).

The barricade and the events around it became a focus for learning and an opportunity for creative participation which acted as an antidote to the passivity of submission (Viénet, 1968: 142).

As we follow the movement from the boundary of the house to the barricade at the bridge, we witness a chronicle of the expansion of the space which is 'liberated'. The occupation of the physical space - the field of the dead, the streets, the graffiti filled walls, the bridge and by extension the entire *población* - united into a coherent whole by the boundary of the barricades, parallel the occupation of the internal space in the minds of the protesters. The transformations of meaning being etched into the 'landscape' were being correspondingly etched in the 'inscapes' (Gerald Manley Hopkins) of the imagination.

A DISPOSABLE BOUNDARY

We see then that after years of submission to the military dictatorship, relieved by occasional though sporadic acts of resistance, the most successful response so far had been the national protests. These became transformed quickly into a paradigm of popular rebellion through the emergence of the barricades, of a new boundary, which politically redefined certain areas as liberated space - space within which a certain creative control could be exercised by those who had hitherto been denied a voice and which at its height promised to become the centre for the overthrow of the regime. The emergence of the barricade as the marker of this new, bounded space was characterised, as we have seen, by the fact that it was constituted by various objects of resistance but most importantly by the bodily presence of the protesters which formed an integral part of the barricade. Its dynamic quality has led me to describe it in terms of a boundary-in-action, that it to say, divorced from action its character as boundary was considerably diminished emphasised by the fact that the following day all had physically returned to normal. I have also argued that the function of the barricade as boundary was to act as a didactic focus for the wider issue of political opposition which was on-going beyond the time scale of these events.

One might question whether the barricades are about boundary at all. There is the danger, as Cohen suggests, of imputing one's own 'mental constructs' to others (Cohen,1986: 17). Nevertheless, I would argue that the barricades were indeed a question of boundary not least of all because the protesters constructed them and perceived them as such. Indeed during the times of barricade there was much discussion about the difference between neighbouring *poblaciones*, a comparison normally absent from day to day concerns. Only in the inevitable football competitions was such rivalry and distinction maintained. The imagery and language however, was territorial in a more specific sense: that of Pinochet and that of the people, where his territory ended and where the people's began. The 'walkabout' by Alvaro and his team before the action began, was an inspection of this territory. There was an attempt to define identities depending on one's position in space in relation to the barricades.

Of course not everyone would share this remaking of meaning of the *población*. As Cohen points out, 'boundaries consist essentially in the contrivance of distinctive meanings within the Community's social discourse. People construct their community symbolically, making it a resource and a repository of meaning' (ibid;). In this case the construct of the protesters might have been a million miles away from that of many other *pobladores*, and their notion of community and identity much different, but the attempt to make it mean what they wanted it to mean is none the less valid for that. The notion of boundary which I employ in that particular context is not one of ethnic identity but rather of political identity of a different order. The distinctions imputed at the barricade concern competing discourses: the outside discourse of Pinochet and the inside discourse of the protesters and their supporters in the *población*. Of course this has implications for identity or, better said, identities, but this is not primarily to be understood in terms of belonging to *Lo Errazuriz* but rather in terms of 'those who opposed Pinochet' as differentiated from those who did not. In this sense the boundary enclosed a discourse not shared by all. It was as possible, under these circumstances, for an 'insider' to be classed as an 'outsider' as it was for someone from outwith the area to become an 'insider'. The defining moment was acceptance of a particular kind of discourse. One which used the 'circling' of a particular territory as its concrete enactment. Of course the participants in the discourse did not for the most part invest all their identity within that boundary

and so might identify themselves in quite different ways the following day. McFarlane writing of the 'operational models' used by the people themselves to cope with social life as opposed to reflecting upon it says:

> In relation to the Catholic and Protestant boundary, they deal with the interplay of such things as normative schemes which are internally conflicting; views about the relevance of this boundary in different kinds of social occasions in different domains of life; ideas about the intensity of kinds of social relationships which weave behind and across the boundary; and rules of strategy for playing up and playing down the relevance of the boundary on different occasions (1986: 101).

In the case of Lo Errazuriz we can add the complication that many would not even recognize the boundary as such in the first place. But, the following day, life had to go on for everyone. As McFarlane goes on to observe: 'They know that there are times when being Catholic or Protestant has to be asserted, and that there are other times when it can be "forgotten" about'. Or in the case of the *población* there were times for creating boundaries and investing them with the importance of life and death and then there were times to pass them by as if they had never existed at all. In fact we might say that the boundary at the time of protest was the production of a differently 'imagined community', a possible one, an ideal one, a hopeful one but one which everyone knew, at that particular time, was not a real possibility except in the moments of it being acted out.

The boundary marked the beginning and end of that 'community' of purpose, of protest. But why was such marking necessary? As Cohen argues, 'the simple answer is that boundary encapsulates the identity of the community and, like the identity of an individual, is called into being by the exigencies of social interaction' (1985: 12). However, he also goes on to argue that boundaries ' may [also] be thought of . . . as existing in the minds of their beholders. This being so, the boundary may be perceived in rather different terms, not only by people on opposite sides of it, but by people on the same side' (ibid;). This not only reflects the different views and implications of the barricades but it also goes someway to explaining how the protesters then managed to maintain their own sense of community in the clandestine time in between the protests.

However, with attention focused upon the boundary formed by the barricades, it would be easy to forget that the domestic space, enclosed by the railings, still continued its important function as a place of retreat and safety. The railings, even in the heat of battle remained as a permanent, protective barrier against the dangers of the world. Indeed during the protests the majority of the *pobladores* were taking full advantage of this protection, completely abandoning the street and even the *sitio* in which the house was built and virtually sealing themselves up for the duration of the conflict. In contrast the boundary at the barricades, constituted in items that eventually are easily removed, in material being consumed by flames, and people who would eventually have to withdraw, suggests a clear lack of permanence.

In fact it is quite important to acknowledge that the sites at which the boundary was constructed for the duration and purpose of the protests had little significance outside of these events. They were markers of convenience used to define the *población* as an area of political significance at certain moments but there was little concern to continue these distinctions beyond those few, short hours. The barricade/boundaries, although they did in fact follow the already accepted boundaries between each of the surrounding *poblaciones*, were seen to be superfluous for this purpose outside of the protests. Indeed the distinction between each *población* was not all that important. It was not particularly significant to construct an identity in terms of ones own *población* over and against that of the others. *Población* identity in terms of difference was not considered to be of any great importance and was understood as merely the result of the various histories of their foundation when the original inhabitants established themselves in that locality, often on the same day, through a mass invasion of land or some similar process. The *pobladores* would, in fact, have come from a variety of circumstances; some as economic migrants from the rural areas, others might have been the newly married couples from families in other *poblaciones* where overcrowding made moving a necessity.

The point is that few *poblaciones* had any common history powerful enough to create a significant, homogeneous local identity. In fact ethnicity was much more commonly expressed in terms of being Chilean. A common greeting, always tongue in cheek but no less significant for that, would be *"hola Chileno"* (hello Chilean), to which the reply would be *"hola Chileno"* or *"Chilena"*. The theme of national pride was intense and though promoted

heavily by the military government as a dominant image for their own ends, it was not, by any means, their creation. They were able to exploit this imagery because it was already so potent in the national psyche. Indeed the one occasion when I heard an action of Pinochet actually being praised, though grudgingly, by people normally implacably opposed to him, was when he declared the popular *cueca* as the national dance.

The clear marking of the boundaries, then, had objectives other than the construction of identity; they marked the opportunity to rehearse the liberation not only of a sector, but were also part of a national protest with national objectives. They were a focus of convenience - establishing parameters for consolidation but only to invite a going beyond their confines. The aim was not a liberated, 'no go' area, but rather the 're-conquest of Chile' itself.

These boundaries were merely instrumental and once having served their purpose as a focus of energy and creative involvement, they were just as quickly abandoned, as much conceptually as physically. On the day of the protest the protesters were capable of great acts of heroism, placing their lives in danger in order to defend the integrity of the barricade, the following day the sites of these skirmishes were passed without further acknowledgement, although for many their memory was still of crucial importance. Nevertheless, for all practical intents and purposes, they were disposable boundaries.

THE RE-APPROPRIATION OF SPACE

The construction of the barricades sets the scene within which it is possible to observe the slow development of political agency. The barricade becomes an instrument through which meaning is given not only to the confined space, symbolically liberated, but also to the exterior space yet to be liberated. This instrumentality is evoked by Feldman when he says that:

> The spatial inscription of practices and power involves physical flows, metabolic transactions and transfers - exchanges which connect, separate, distance, and hierarchize one space in relation to another. The command of space further entails the setting aside of places of imaginary representation: eulogized, purifying, or defiling spaces that mobilize spectacles of historical transformation (1991: 9).

In the seminal actions prior to the national movement of protest we have already come across this setting aside of a place, *la cancha de los muertos*, the field of the dead, which was to be the scene of a struggle about the imposition of meaning. Whose meaning was to endure in that place? That which rested upon the images of fear imputed by the military or that which rested upon the images that this fear can be defeated and its perpetrators along with it?

The focus was upon a piece of land which had been transformed into a permanent reminder of the oppressive power of the authorities. The mutilated bodies that were left to lie upon it formed a clear message to the *población* about the consequences of unapproved political affiliation and opposition to the government, they were a 'text' written upon the landscape of that wasteland. The struggle to take command of this space was indeed a struggle of the imagination because the bodies had been long ago removed, yet the message remained. The procession through the streets which preceded the religious performance had the function of 'gathering up' people's attention. It was an invitation to look, to become aware, and in this way to participate in the event.

This procession, like the marches of the early protests still some time in the future, was itself an organising instrument of the space of the *población* as its participants carrying their ambiguous placards of protest and prayer, attempted to reorder, in the minds of both the processionists and the onlookers, the meaning of their experience of their daily space. Space as such is constituted by areas of different values, it has no existence as some kind of independent entity (Durkheim, 1915: 23; Thornton, 1980: 13-14). As Einstein put it: "Space has no objective reality except as an order or arrangement of the objects we perceive in it, and time has no independent existence apart from the order of events by which we measure it" (Quoted by Peacock, 1986:22). The procession and its final act were precursors of the marches and the barricades in the attempt to refocus and expand the intimate space of the imagination through a physical enactment upon significant objects of physical space. With this we again come upon a hermeneutic circle where the physical enactment of a project brings about transformations in the thought and imagination of the actors, which in turn refine and redefine subsequent action.

At the scene of the murders an attempt was made, through the use of religious language and imagery, to write a new 'text', to transcend the meaning imposed upon that place. That new 'text' attempted to transform the abiding image of the murdered victims as the pathetic result of pointless resistance, to one of martyrdom - the heroic price to be paid in the necessary struggle for a new, just order, an example and ideal of courage - not to encourage martyrdom, as the 'text' of the fanatic, but as a demonstration that meaning cannot be prescribed nor obeisance taken for granted.

In these events we can see an emerging model for the actions of protest and resistance which were to occur over the following months and years. This model revolves around the imperative experienced by many of the actors we have been observing to re-appropriate the political and social agency which the authorities denied them - the right to meet, to dissent, to organise, to have a say in the direction of their lives and creative input into the future of Chilean society. The right not to have to choose only between passivity and fear.

In the religious ceremony at the field of the dead, an act of re-appropriation of the space, usurped by the military for its own the purposes, has taken place. Robert Thornton in his study of space among the Iraqw of Tanzania also emphasizes this aspect:

> Appropriation is an act of definition: The definition or delineation of a space is a cultural appropriation of that space. And, any appropriation of space, of land in particular - but also of more abstract spaces such as the sky from which rain comes and where spirits reside - must be considered as a political act since it involves power over persons and over productive resources of the society (Thornton, 1980: 133).

The ceremony at the field of the dead was not a rehearsal or pre-political act, it was a political act in its own right, one which attempted to redefine precisely who had what power over whom. This act of appropriation, the temporary, physical control of space in order to define a new and more permanent meaning, intended to reinforce an attitude of resistance in the participants, can be seen repeated in all of the subsequent events which I have described.

In the first protest the action was centred upon a march through the streets an action which was forbidden because the authorities considered it to be their prerogative to decide the kind of political statements which could be

made in public- none of which could criticize the *status quo*. The streets, public space in all other respects were also the space upon which a political 'text' had been written, a 'text' clearly underlined by the *guanacos* (water canon), the tear gas and violence used in the ruthless repression of all demonstrations in the city centre. In the simple march of the first protest the banging of the pans re-wrote that 'text' with its own message of protest against the hunger and poverty seen as a consequence of government policy which is now openly challenged, where the streets are re-appropriated and, for a short time, their character as public forum is rescued.

The second protest reiterates the same message with the banging of pans, this time with more confidence. In addition there is a wider encompassing of space as two columns march in both halves of the *población*. But we can also see an extension of the 'counter-text'. First of all there is the added significance of the coming together of the two columns, both of which had grown in size on their progress, reinforcing the sensation of power and solidarity as the two groups merged. Secondly, there is the building of the first barricade on the bridge, an added statement of defiance and a challenge to the military regime.

By the eleventh protest this theme of the re-appropriation of space and the proposal of new 'texts' had become even more emphatic. The spraying of the messages upon the walls by the bridge explicitly reinforce the textual metaphor; but the scattering of *miguelitos*, the driving of the iron stakes into the road, and even the burning of the tyres can also be seen as 'texts': the physical marking of the landscape which make statements that go far beyond their tactically limited usefulness.

And so, in a spatial analysis of the protests, we can see that the expansion of significant physical space and the expansion of confidence, daring and courage of the actors, go hand in hand and is an example, perhaps, of what Bachelard is referring to when he says that: "The two kinds of space, intimate space and exterior space, keep encouraging each other, as it were, in their growth" (1964:201).

The expansion of re-appropriated space becomes a mirror image of the re-appropriation of the inner space of the protesters as social agents. No matter how many times the streets were to be re-occupied by the military, the minds

of the protesters had constructed permanent barricades of the imagination against the attempts to control them by fear and propaganda.

III

THE SECOND MILITARY ENGAGEMENT

With the retreat of the armed civilians from the bridge and there being no sign of an impending attack from any reinforcements that might have been requested by those mysterious, civilian visitors, Alvero sent a number of the *compañeros* to reinforce the barricades on the furthest edges of the *población*. Meanwhile the main action of the night was prepared.

Pancho had been given the unenviable task, in the midst of all the preceding excitement, of carrying around a plastic shopping bag, well away from the action at the bridge. If he carried it gingerly, rather nervously, and in a conspicuously suspicious manner then I suppose he could be forgiven considering the fact that the bag contained a stick of *Amongelatina*, an explosive used by the mining industry. Pedro, who was the expert in explosive material, had prepared it earlier in the day. The detonator, about the thickness of a pencil and half the size, had been carefully inserted into the soft explosive. The end of the fuse, this time a professional one rather than the home made variety, had been inserted into the open end of the detonator which was then carefully pinched by a pair of pliers. The explosive was finally placed into a small plastic bag of fertilizer which would have the effect of enhancing the explosion.

This was not the first time this more professional type of explosive had been used by the *compañeros*. On a previous occasion they had blown up the railway line in the middle of the night. Disappointingly the authorities had replaced the damaged section before dawn so the propaganda value was much reduced. *El poeta*, one of our neighbours and so named because he was the local (not to mention prodigious) poet, had woken up with the explosion on that occasion and, according to his wife, immediately said, "My god the *muchachos* (young men) have blown up the bridge". Unfortunately he was wrong and anyway it would have taken much more explosive material and more expert knowledge to have destroyed it. However, this suggests the kind of symbolic value which was placed upon it and why it was seen as the

bridge to the outside world, the defining boundary between us and the rest, even though it was a bridge that actually joined the two halves of the *población*.

On this night, however, the target was a major electricity pylon which brought power to the *población* as well as to a larger, surrounding area. It was situated about half a mile outside the barricaded territory on the other side of the *Chacra* - the fields where the infamous Maipu lettuce was grown. This was irrigated with water which was contaminated with sewage and as a result was infected with all kinds of bacteria not least of which was typhoid.

At the appointed time the group in charge of this operation met at the very edge where the *población* and the fields joined. The pylon could be seen in the distance, well illuminated by the street lighting. The six who were responsible for the operation set off carefully carrying the plastic bag. At a third of the distance from the pylon two of the group took refuge behind a small clump of earth. They were armed. One with a revolver the other with two, home-made hand-grenades. At two thirds of the way two others took up a similar position. These were armed with hand-grenades. The final two proceeded to the objective.

The explosive was lifted from the bag and strapped to the pylon with adhesive tape, and, as soon as the fuse was lit they returned running towards the first pair whose job was to act as a rearguard in case they had been spotted and followed. As they ran through, and it was clear that they were not being pursued the rearguard quickly followed them until all four ran past the first pair who were the final rearguard and whose task would, similarly, have been to slow down any pursuers. The six arrived back at the original group.

No explosion followed. At this point Pedro became agitated, 'the fuse has gone out'. But nobody, for obvious reasons, ever went back to check out this kind of possibility. Fortunately, it was not necessary anyway because at that precise moment there was the most tremendous explosion and the pylon could be seen rising into the air amidst a shower of sparks, then absolute darkness as all the electrical power of the area shut off.

It was obvious that this kind of act would bring a swift response. So the explosion was the signal for all the *compañeros*, wherever they were, to

immediately head through the now darkened streets towards that part of the railway line where the embankment overlooked the main road through the *población* as it dropped into the hollow. This was a good vantage point to observe all the roads that crisscrossed the area, a place easy to defend and offering many escape routes that would confuse those unfamiliar with the territory.

The response from the authorities was surprisingly slow in coming and when, finally, it did, it was not from the bridge but from the lower road and through the barricade which Tatiana and the Communists were defending. We could see the action silhouetted in the light of the burning barricade as they hurled molotov cocktails at the approaching bus containing the para-military police. Tatiana and her friends had known nothing of the plan to blow up the power line and so were totally mystified about the cause of the blackout. Nevertheless, they put up a good fight even though the *pacos* had piled out of the bus and were firing tear gas and live rounds in their direction. Faced with this level of firepower their resistance soon ended and we watched as Tatiana and her comrades slipped quickly into the shadows. For a while there was silence as the police moved forward gingerly, checking for booby traps and ambush. Satisfied that there were none they boarded their bus once again and moved slowly forward, through the barricade and down the road directly towards our position. By this time over forty *compañeros* were lying out of sight on the embankment overlooking this scene. The bus slowly approached our position clearly unaware of the audience peering down upon them.

Following the successful operation on the electricity pylon the excitement in the group was high, not to say euphoric. And it was this state of mind, rather than any plan, which contributed to what was to follow. Pedro, who was the oldest member of the group was the first to suggest it: *"Shall we use the grenades?"* The implication of the question was clear to all those who were within hearing distance. From this vantage point a hand-grenade falling onto a vehicle as exposed as was that of the *pacos* could cause serious injury and bring down severe retribution. There were only a few seconds to make the decision. "*Lets do it*", said Alvaro. Pedro quickly lit his and threw it just as the bus turned to run parallel with the embankment. In his haste he did not aim it well and it fell short, onto the embankment itself. There was a pause of a few seconds and then the explosion. The bus immediately braked, which was

fortunate because Antonio had just launched the second grenade which landed a few feet ahead of the vehicle and exploded at once.

The response from the police was immediate and, as one might expect, professional and efficient. They poured out of the bus firing automatic weapons in our direction and running directly up the steep slope towards us. This was my cue for a hasty retreat down the other side of the embankment and in towards the now, pitch black *población*. As I ran I could hear the sounds of further automatic gun fire followed by a third explosion. I learned afterwards that the police, obviously unsure about what they were facing, limited themselves to occupying the top of the embankment and shooting at the retreating *compañeros*. The third explosion, which was a hand grenade which had been left to cover the retreat obviously convinced them not to pursue.

Within twenty minutes the entire *población* was invaded by police, not only heavily armed but, unusually, with dogs. By this time however, the protesters had dispersed, and, under the circumstances of a national protest where actions were under way over a large area of the city, the police were limiting themselves on this occasion to merely restoring order. The fact that the protesters had dispersed themselves left the police with nothing to do but patrol the area in a state of alert. Twenty minutes later they left and the evening of protest ended.

In effect this was to be the last of the large protests. The next day Pinochet, faced with the fact that they were escalating in intensity, increasingly taking on the characteristics of a military confrontation, declared a State of Siege and unleashed the most brutal repression since the time of the *military coup* of 1973. For three months tanks patrolled the streets, *poblaciones* were raided in pre-dawn, military operations and more than 32,000 people were rounded up and questioned, some imprisoned and others sent into internal exile.

BEYOND THE BOUNDARY

Once again, in the final events of this last of the large protests, the focus upon boundary understood as threshold, as the divide between the security of the known and the dangers of the unknown, between what is and what might be, is thrown to the fore. Just as the crossing of the divide between house

and street developed to become the efficient organisation of urban resistance, so the crossing of the boundary of the liberated space of the *población* to attack a target found unambiguously in 'enemy territory' presaged possible, future events but with ominous implications. As Tarrow suggests, 'the power of protest lies neither in its numbers, nor its level of violence, but in its threat to burst through the boundaries of the accepted limits of behaviour' (Tarrow, 1989:7). The crossing of the barricade brought this threat, in all its dimensions, to a head.

The escalation implicit in entering 'enemy territory' in order to commit an act of serious sabotage had important consequences for the direction that the protests might take. In the latest act of 'crossing over' we can see the physical rupture of this boundary mirrored, once again, in a rupture of the mental boundary of the protesters as they felt free to use the hand-grenades in an offensive and potentially lethal manner. There can be little doubt, given the regime's capacity for violent repression and its clear willingness to make use of it, that this pre-meditated act of going beyond the boundaries of previous protests, an escalation in both attitude and action, would have led inexorably to the kind of violent confrontation which would have resulted in even more suffering for the population.

Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the protesters appear to have arrived at this critical juncture impressed, if not actually amazed, with the development of their capacity for powerful and creative response to the conditions that kept so many of their compatriots enthralled and thus paralysed by fear. The crossing of the thresholds and the re-occupation, the re-appropriation of the outer-space, becomes, for the *compañeros*, and in a way, also many of those who willed them on from the safety of their homes, a parallel re-occupation of the inner space of the self.

As we saw in the first protest, the act of successfully challenging the power of the regime was in itself a liberation. Although the military could direct and control people and events by the use of physical force (or, at least, the threat of it), they had already lost much of their capacity to convince, to occupy the inner recesses of the imagination, to gain hegemony over the images of reality that is essential for true occupation of the human condition (Comaroff and Comaroff, 1991: 28-30). Social control without cultural conviction appears, here at least, to be only partly successful in terms of voluntary

submission. The longer the protests lasted and the more successful they became in their capacity to take the initiative from Pinochet, then the more difficult it became for him, despite all attempts to control the means of cultural production, to dominate the operative images of the people and to turn them into the unquestioning citizens that he so clearly wanted them to be.

And yet the battle for the influence of minds was closely fought. In that final event which was to begin the process of the removal of Pinochet from the centre of power (if not entirely from the scene), which was the plebiscite of October 5, 1988, the people had to decide, yes or no, whether Pinochet should continue for a further eight years. He lost only by a narrow margin . And even in the final election of Dec 14, 1989 the opposition won by a respectable though not massive vote. Clear margins in a democracy but perilously close after fifteen years of dictatorship.

Much credit would be given, world wide, to the maturity of the political party leaderships after these successes. And yet it is probable that without the 'casting out' of the 'demon of fear' which took place during the protests, their margin for success would have been greatly diminished if not entirely destroyed. And it is here that a major feature of the protests is to be found. With hindsight it is obvious that there never was any possibility of overthrowing Pinochet. The protests, in themselves could not generate sufficient power to enforce such a course of events by the opposition nor, on the other hand could they influence the political will to replace Pinochet's authoritarian regime by the Armed forces and their supporters (Constable and Valenzuela, 1991).

However, consideration of these issues which would be played out in the longer term, should not distract us from the fact that the protests had more immediate consequences for the protesters. Here, we can observe that from the ambiguity of the first procession to the explicitness of the attack upon the invading police force; from the internal, contemplative reflections of the house based organisation to the sweeping movements through the streets, the establishment of liberated territory and the projection of the struggle even beyond those boundaries, that we are in the presence of an ever expanding process of the development of the re-appropriation of power.

The creation of a liberated area of space has a metaphorical quality insofar as it represents an 'as if' state of affairs. The *población* came to be a place experienced 'as if' the people really did have power over their own lives, 'as if' they really could defy and reject the impositions of the regime, 'as if' they really could shut out the threats and the fear implicit in everyday life. During the period of protest this metaphor of power and control is lived as the operative image and as such becomes a tool with which to explore the potential for organisation, solidarity and commitment, and with which to explore and challenge the apparent invincibility of the regime. The following day, when the protest has ended, the metaphor retains its subversive power in the imagination of the protesters. The period after protest now became another level of resistance, of clandestine activity, planning and struggle through more sporadic and subtle means. In both periods, during and outwith the protests, the images of being involved in a rebellion, of participating in an organisation of combat, of being a revolutionary, imply not living in the reality prescribed by Pinochet but rather 'changing the venue', choosing 'to pass beyond a boundary' and as a consequence it becomes 'another ball game'. If one is disadvantaged in one domain then one shifts to another (Fernandez, 1986:10).

The domain of Pinochet was the authoritarian, military view of reality. His view as he stated in 1977 was of a duty to:

> Form a new democracy that will be authoritarian, protected, integrating, technically modern, and with authentic social participation. . . The classic liberal state, naive and spineless must be replaced with one willing to use strong and vigorous authority to defend the citizens from demagoguery and violence (Constable and Valenzuela, 1991: 71).

This top down vision of political power was challenged in the domain of the protest with its image of power from the bottom up (ultimately to be betrayed by the political party leaderships).

The important feature of the protest as metaphor is not that it provides an 'as if' world merely for the activists themselves. Its symbolic work can also be understood in terms of a theatrical metaphor where 'the creation of an artificial space or semblance' which thus 'sets the stage for a concentration of suggestions: of connotations, of emotions, and of authority' for the audience

watching and listening from the safety of their homes (Edelman, 1985: 96-7). From that vantage point they could, through the propaganda mediated through television, watch Pinochet in his magnificent white uniform, decorated with the sash of presidency, and embellished with his floor length military cape - a manifestation of regal dignity, order and power. At the same time, out on the street, they could witness the protesters in their ski-masks and scarfs, unkempt and unruly in rebellion, all of which formed a juxtaposition of images that left the audience with work to do in the mind and conundrums to unravel in the imagination. The construction of boundaries, the struggle at the barricades become the setting for a drama, a performance aimed at the people and equally aimed at the authorities. The purpose was to uplift the former and to confound the latter; to strengthen the resolve of the one and to weaken the certainty of the other.

POWER FOR WHOM?

The emphasis upon boundary allows for an experience of the tension of what lies on either side. This is methodologically crucial in any attempt to understand the events which I have been describing. It is entirely possible to start with the boundary and from that vantage point gaze inwards upon a discreet, social and cultural world. But the danger of such an approach would be to reduce the experience of the people to simple stories (Comaroff and Comaroff, 1992: 17). To focus exclusively upon the bounded place, while having the benefit of rescuing the voice from "below" made silent by fear and repression, would, nevertheless, decontextualize it to the point where it 'becomes a *cul-de-sac*' and would, therefore, lose its subversive potential (Samuel, 1989:23).

To gaze from the barricade is, necessarily, to gaze in both directions. It is to recognize how the exercise of power from one side has social and cultural implications for the other; that the dominant text is woven with the text of the dominated and so the text of each becomes, in turn, a context of the other. Although it would be easy to paint a simplistic and romantic picture of the poor rising up in protest against domination, bravely protesting their conditions and struggling for freedom, nevertheless, when we appropriately contextualize these events, a more subtle picture begins to emerge.

It is not coincidental that the first protest, which began as a strike call from the unions, occurred in May 1983. Only five months previously the whole

economic strategy of the government had virtually collapsed and the much lauded 'economic miracle' of the free-market 'Chicago-boys' ground to halt as the Minister of the Economy was forced, on the January 13, 1983, to announce the state intervention in a number of banks three of which had debts three times higher than their assets and had to be liquidated. A further five had to be taken over and two others placed under observation (Constable and Valenzuela, 1991:196). The confidence of foreign lenders collapsed and the IMF was forced to impose the most severe conditions in return for new loans. At the same time external creditors demanded a guarantee from the government that it would cover the entire foreign debt of the companies that had been taken over which was estimated at U.S.$7.7 billion. 'During the boom, Chile's economic gains had been privatized; now, in the crunch, the country's losses were socialized' (ibid; p.197). As a result Pinochet's stock amongst his own supporters, military and civilian, was considerably weakened and his continuance in power put into doubt (although briefly) for the first time in ten years (McAdam, 1982; Tarrow, 1989).

Gazing outward from the barricade it was also possible to observe another important shift in power relations which, over the following years, was to have important implications for the development of political agency in the *poblaciones*. This was the role which the political parties began to assume at this juncture.

The Unions, who originally called the protests in support of a strike, had the organisation to form the base of such action but, at the same time, this left them exposed and vulnerable. The union members, being so easily identified, were open to all kinds of pressure being brought to bear upon them exposing their weakness for sustained political activity. However, at this point, the political parties and especially the Christian Democrats (Valenzuela and Valenzuela, 1986) began to emerge from their imposed recess to take advantage of the political crisis of Pinochet. The parties now began to take more command of the political protest which moved ambiguously towards calling for the overthrow of the regime while at the same time simply calling for its liberalization (ibid; p. 242).

In all of these developments it becomes clear that the struggle at the bridge, while not merely marginal, neither is it central to the political processes that are occurring in the city. The view from the bridge was one of lives being

risked for the sake of a more human future; meanwhile the negotiation for the power to make decisions over that future were taking place between the military, its supporters, and the traditional political parties of opposition. The struggle was taking place at the bridge; power, however, was already being negotiated elsewhere and between different actors. In this sense the protests played an important part in eventually undermining the Military Regime. But in terms of an empowerment of the people, enabling them to set the priorities for new forms of social organisation, they failed. As the traditional political leaderships came back into the centre of events, riding upon the backs of the protesters, so the role of the protests was diminished to that of the 'popular rebellion' card that the players of the political game would mutually invoke for their own purposes (see Oppenheim, 1993). For Pinochet they were a symbol of the chaos that would exist without him; for the opposition parties they would be presented as either the kind of chaos that Pinochet's presence was provoking or as the kind of popular power that they could call upon if negotiations did not go their way. In the short term Pinochet won the game. The protests lost their impetus and the opposition parties, although regaining a presence upon the scene, were outmanoeuvred.

CONCLUSION

The imposition of the state of siege, in effect, announced the end of the development of the movement of protest as an attempt to place the *poblaciones* in the centre of the struggle for power. From that moment there is a shift in the political landscape that slowly placed them back to their traditional role on the periphery of power. So what was achieved?

If, as Leach and Moore suggest, we accept that space can be taken as analogous to language (Leach, 1976:10; Moore, 1992:1-2) then the movement of bodies through the población, in an escalating movement towards the final confrontation, can be understood as an articulation of an alternative discourse to that of the military dictatorship of Pinochet. The boundary/barricade became the focus for a counter-text and indeed even a counter-culture (Moore, 1992:74; Worsley, 1984:53-54) against the attempt of the armed forces to militarise civilian life (Constable and Valenzuela, 1991:64-89; Foucault 1975:168).

This notion of 'counter' is important in the understanding of the events of the various levels of protest for, once again, it enables us to avoid the temptation

to 'read' the text without reference to the wider context and limit our observations to the internal movement of social relations and construction of meanings in a way that eventually would reduce them as phenomena without direction. It is necessary to understand the text in terms of *parole*, 'as process, as the actualised product of social actors in a particular context' and not merely as *langue*, its internal relations (Moore, 1992:80). A text can not be comprehended at the level of analysis which takes the sentence as the basic constructor of meaning. The sentence must always refer beyond itself, to the wider 'picture', and ultimately it is this which gives direction, organisation and meaning to the sentences. The narrower, internal analysis of a text will, as Ricoeur (1981:152) suggests, lead to explanation, whereas an analysis in the sense of referring this to the wider context, will allow for interpretation. It is to follow the movement of a text 'from sense to reference; from what it says, to what it talks about' (Ricoeur, 1976:87-88).

This approach to interpretation can contribute to the reading of the text of the protests. For instance, we have seen how, as the last protest is about to get underway, the returning workers alighted quickly from the buses which took them off to their employment in the city early in the morning and deposited them home in the evenings to their precariously built, overcrowded little houses. In this event we have an ordered movement of bodies through the space organised by more powerful interests who have designated this area for the domestic existence of the workers, and another space where the actual work is carried out. Other buses carried other, more skilled workers, to and from a better class of *barrio*, while the owners themselves could travel, by private means, to and from *barrios* designated as more fitting for such persons.

The distribution of people throughout this spectrum has its own, inner logic. Providing each group is content with, or at least accepts, such a distribution of bodies in space then an explanation for the smooth running of such a society can be 'manufactured'; its structure made plain for all to see. Yet on the particular night in question this daily movement encountered events that would not fit such a neat model and we are forced to read further along this text of 'bodies in space'. There, at the barricade, we find bodies which are not being moved around by others in an involuntary way, but those of people who have freely chosen to place their bodies here and not elsewhere; who are not imposed upon, but rather imposed themselves upon that place. They are not

moved around in an orderly and organised manner designed to achieve the ends of the powerful, but rather, they moved themselves around in an orderly and organised manner to achieve their own ends. In the process they place their physical integrity, if not their very lives, at risk. The military will eventually come to punish this deviation from the norm; after all, 'the body becomes a useful force only if it is both a productive body and a subjected body' (Foucault, 1975:26). If we contrast the text, which describes the workers entering the 'tube like process' which led them to their places of work and back again, to the text which includes the protesters who stood resolute at the barricade, we can observe the difference between bodies made docile by a system and bodies made defiant by resistance to it (Foucault, 1975: 138ff).

In a similar way, the bodies which were left upon the field, as we have previously seen, provided another text which warned the people of the consequences of resistance to the regime. But, in the light of the protests, we become aware of further aspects to that text. The bodies represented those who were designated as 'subversives', 'revolutionaries', 'communists', harbingers of chaos. As their murdered bodies fell upon the ground of that place we can see how this same chaos is brought under control. The text of chaos was being re-written before the very eyes of the onlookers as the order and discipline of military might was brought to bear. Death becomes a metaphor for chaos brought back into order.

If that text could have claimed dominance, Pinochet might have won. But the protests, and the presence of the *compañeros* at the barricade, re-write that text again and again. The order, so loved by the military, is contradicted by the chaos of rebellion; and the image of death, through which they wished to impose it, is brought into contrast with the vitality and determination of the protesters as they challenge death itself.

No text written upon human space is ever definitive and is always open to alternative readings, each of which is a claim to provide an interpretation (Moore, 1992:86). Yet there can never be a meaningful reading of a text without context, that is to say, without relation to other texts (ibid; p.85). And it was in this that the real strength of protest lay, because to challenge the interpretation of a text is one thing; to provide a new and contradictory text is quite another. The text of the regime was one of the human spirit as

vanquished, controlled and docile; the text of the protesters was one of a gradual re-awakening, a coming to life, a re-occupation of creative space and the reassertion of hope for the future. Not everyone, of course, would read the texts with this same interpretation; but at least Pinochet's text was no longer the only one available.

CHAPTER FIVE

HOLY WEEK

I

PALM SUNDAY

Beautiful is probably not the word that would spring immediately to the mind of a casual visitor to the *población*. And yet to stroll down the early morning streets on a summer's day, before the mid-day sun reached its energy sapping zenith, before the afternoon wind whipped up the dust; to see the houses set against the backdrop of the Andes mountains, to meet the children hurrying to buy the breakfast bread, to hear the blaring, early morning competition of a thousand radios, to greet the army of women sweeping the pavements, removing yesterday's dust in preparation for today's deposit, is to appreciate a deeper significance of that word too often used to describe only a veneer.

On that particular early Sunday morning my stroll was one with a purpose. Ahead of me, leading the way through the streets of the *población*, was *El Bigote* carrying high above his head the blue cross of the Christian Community, the *Comunidad Ecclesial de Base* (CEB). I followed cradling in my arms a large branch from a palm tree. We were not alone. Behind us was a column of around two hundred people, each carrying bunches of palm leaves. This was the Palm Sunday procession and, as usual, the point of departure had been the football field at the edge of the *barrio*. As this spectacle made its way, winding up and down the streets in its familiar pattern, more people began to tag on. Jorge and the other musicians spread themselves along the ever growing crowd in the usual optimistic and completely unsuccessful attempt to co-ordinate the singing of hymns which, nevertheless, were sung with gusto. The high moment of this movement was the arrival at the Sunday *feria*, the fruit and vegetable market where, on a normal Sunday, many of the processionists would already be doing their weekly shopping. Moving through its centre we began to 'sweep up' even more of their customers carrying them off to the piece of wasteland designated as the site for the Church yet to be built.

The crowd, now numbering about four hundred, squeezed onto the triangular shaped piece of land in the centre of the *barrio*. El Bigote, liberated from the cross which now stood at the side of the table around which we were all gathered, addressed the people. He reminded them that this was Palm Sunday, the first day of the week called by tradition 'Holy Week', because it recalled the events in the final days of the life of Jesus of Nazareth. The procession in which we had all just participated, he continued, reminded us of the first day of that week when Jesus had entered Jerusalem to be greeted by the ordinary people, living under the military occupation of the Romans, as their leader, as the one for whom they had been waiting.

There then followed the reading of the story from the Bible which recounted the events of the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, the events later in the week which recounted the last meal he had with his closest disciples, his arrest, imprisonment, torture and finally his execution. As was the custom, it was read as a play without actions; different people reading the dialogue of each character of the story while another read the descriptive narrative which bound it together. When this telling of the story was completed the climactic moment arrived which was the real reason that most people had come.

Lucho arrived at my elbow carrying a dish of water and a small bundle of twigs from some unidentifiable plant. This was my cue to ask the people to raise their palm leaves above their heads. Shouting to be heard at the back of the crowd, I explained that this ceremony was a reminder that we had to renew our commitment to the one who had come to lead his people out of domination to freedom. I reminded them how the people on that first event had greeted Jesus with palm leaves only to abandon him when, later that same week, the situation became dangerous, when they realised that they would have to take risks to gain their freedom from oppression and fear.

At this point, following the prescribed ritual, I wandered amongst the crowd, Lucho at my heels with the bowl, liberally sprinkling the 'blessed' water over leaves and people. This part of the ceremony was by far the most important. The words and explanations were an attempt to place the actions into an historical context with the intention that they would have some influence upon the attitude of the people towards the current situation in Chile. However, it was probable that the majority were there because this was the time of year to replace the now dried-out palm leaves that had been hanging in their

houses since this same ceremony the previous year. The blessing with water gave the leaves a sacred quality which was never really articulated but generally understood in terms of vague protection or blessing (good luck, keeping harm at bay) for the household.

These proceedings were always marked by a particular lack of reverence, it was good fun and there was much hilarity as some people received splashes of water in the face although there was also much consternation if others did not feel at least some splash of water which might imply that their leaves had not come into contact with this 'holy substance'.

In the past it had always caused me considerable annoyance when, throughout the rest of the day, people would continue to arrive at my house asking for private blessings of their palm leaves because for one reason or another they had not attended the morning liturgy. For the first couple of years I entered into all kinds of theological explanations why this was not possible as a result of which people would go away commenting upon the unfeeling and ungracious attitude of *el padre*. The problem was that these individual sermons took up more time than any blessing and had no impact nor indeed relevance upon the theological imagery of the people. My answer, in the end, was to capitulate by placing a bowl of water outside my house with a sign saying that this was for the blessing of the palm leaves. From then on the late comers would come along, dip their leaves and go home content. In fact this 'do-it-yourself' ritual confirmed that in much of the religious belief and practice of the people, the priest was more a hindrance than a help and could quite happily be by-passed if he would only co-operate.

With the ceremony of the blessing of the palms completed the liturgy moved into its Eucharist phase, *La Misa*, the Mass of the Catholic tradition. This is the liturgy of the bread and wine, the significance of which becomes transformed and is eaten and drunk as 'the body and blood of Christ'. This part of the ceremony is totally priest-centred, and apart from certain refrains, spoken or sung, the people play a passive role. Normally the liturgy of the Eucharist is articulated through one of only four, universal 'Eucharist Prayers' which may be chosen at will but which must be used word for word. In the *CEBs*, however, it had become a common practice to attempt a variety of more experimental expressions in an attempt to implicate these sacred rites in the current social and political context.

On this Palm Sunday, with the crowd gathered in the open air around the table, some of the children brought up a jug of wine and a plate of bread rolls from Mirta's house which was nearby. Standing at the table I began :

Como cuando se ha ejecutado una
pena de muerte, así de silencios
y estremecidos, con la mirada
perdida en el horror,
te bendecimos hoy, Padre
de los ajusticiados. En la cruz de
Jesús converje, como en un cáliz,
la sangre viva de los mártires,
de los hombres justos
-matados impunemente segun la ley
por el delito de amar a su pueblo-.

Just like when they have carried out
a sentence of death, like this
silent and shaking,
gaze lost in horror,
we bless you today, Father
of the executed. On the cross
of Jesus there converges, as if in a
chalice, the living blood of martyrs,
of the just killed with impunity
according to the law
for the crime of having loved their people.

Juan Carlos who was standing by my side took up the theme and said:

Aquí están, en el torbellino de su
Pasión, los matados por causas justas,
el cuello segado de los rebeldes,
el pensamiento prohibido de
los creadores, la lengua torturado
de los profetas, el cuerpo quemado de
los reformadores y las manos amputados
de los que edificaron el futuro.

Here they are, in the whirlwind of your
Passion, those killed for just causes,
the slashed throat of the rebels,
the forbidden thought of creative
people, the tortured tongue
of the prophets, the burnt body of
reformers and the amputated hands
of those who built the future.

It was Jorge's turn from his place in the midst of the crowd:

No podemos nombrar el número de cruces
que pueblan el horizonte de las tierras.
Desde el filo de la espada hasta
la cuchilla de la guilotina;
desde el caño de los fusiles hasta
el hongo de las bombas atómicas. . .

We cannot name the number of crosses
which populate the horizon of the lands.
From the edge of the sword
to the blade of the guillotine;
from the barrel of the rifle to the
mushroom of the atomic bomb. . .

Es la cara de la humanidad humillada,
que como en un Guernica de Picasso
sostiene a sus hijos sin vida
y sin alma. Masas y pueblos enteros,
Padre, están siendo ametrallados,
exterminados, doblegados con
vara de hierro.

It is the face of humiliated humanity,
which as if in a Guernica of Picasso
carries its children lifeless
and without soul. Masses and entire peoples
Father, are being gunned down,
exterminated, made to submit with
a rod of iron.

From amongst the people, the voice of Miguel:

A todo este horror humano decimos ¡¡NO!!
Como una montaña de bronce se levanta
la indignación y apelemos a tu nombre
-nuestro mas sagrado compromiso- para
luchar contra toda pasión y todo
martírio. Sabemos que no eres el Dios
de los asesinos. . .

To all this human horror we say NO!
Like a mountain of bronze our indignation
rises and we call on your name
-our most sacred commitment-
to struggle against all passion
and martyrdom. We know that you are not
the God of murderers. . .

Something was happening in the middle of the crowd. There appeared to be some disturbance and muttering could be heard. A small group broke away and could be seen angrily walking back into the *población*. One of them stopped and shouted: "*We have come for the mass not for politics*". They were identified as a group from *El Centro de Madres*, the Mothers Centre, which was a national organisation headed by Pinochet's wife. Nobody

appeared particularly concerned at this display of indignation, but nevertheless it was a timely reminder to the congregation of the certain presence of police informers whose task it was to participate fully in these events and report back to the security authorities afterwards. The amazing thing was how few people drifted away from this ceremony. Many had already got what they had come for and as the words they were hearing began to take an ominous, political turn it might be expected that the more fearful might take this as a cue to leave. But they stayed.

Miguel continued:

Por eso te bendecimos, cantando: For this we bless you as we sing:

At which point, and according to custom, everyone sang the words which recalled those of the crowd at the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem:
'. . . Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, Hosanna in the highest'.

Lucho, standing by his cross, waited for the refrain to end before continuing the Eucharistic Prayer:

Padre, recordamos la Pasión de Jesus.
Desde el momento en que se destacó
comenzaron a perseguirlo.
Enseguida entró en las listas negras,
y conforme anunciaba su mensaje
iba haciéndose más sospechoso.

Father, we recall the passion of Jesus.
From the moment when he first stood out
they began to persecute him.
He was placed upon the blacklists at once,
and accepting this he announced his message
making himself even more suspicious.

Proclamaba el mundo nuevo, llamaba
al amor, denunciaba el abuso del poder
y del dinero, dijo que el hombre es
hermano y desenmascaró a los que
engañaban al pueblo secuestrando el
nombre de Dios y usandolo para su
propios intereses.

He proclaimed the new world, called people
to love, denounced the abuse of power
and money, said that people are brothers
and sisters and unmasked those who
fooled the people by kidnapping the name
of God and using it
for their own ends.

La Marcela, standing amongst the people, took up the script:

Un día lo detuvo la policía de su
tiempo y lo metieron en la carcel.
Fue interrogado, torturado y
escarnecido. Pero no confesó lo que
querían, sino que dio testimonio de
la verdad y decidieron ejecutarlo.
En un juicio legal e injusto
-con sentencia preparada de antemano-
le condenaron a muerte y aquella misma
tarde, fuera de la ciudad,lo
asesinaron. Como a todos los que matan
a sus hermanos sus manos quedaron
manchadas de sangre.

One day the police of his time
arrested him and put him in prison.
He was interrogated, tortured and
insulted.But he did not confess to
to what they wished, but gave witness to
the truth and they decided to execute him.
In a judgement legal and unjust
-with sentence prepared beforehand-
they condemned him to death and that same
evening, outside the city, they
murdered him. Like all who murder their
their brothers and sisters their hands
remained stained with blood

En la cruz siguió amando,
concedió el perdón y la reconciliación,
pero no se retractó ni un ápice
de su evangelio.
Su Espíritu sigue vivo, inquieta,

On the cross he continued loving,
he bestowed forgiveness and reconciliation,
but he did not retract one iota
of his gospel.
His spirit continues living, restless,

es la fuerza más revolucionaria
de la tierra, a pesar de que hemos
pretendido domesticarlo.

it is the most revolutionary force
of the world, despite the fact that
we have tried to domesticate it.

Finally my turn arrived when I took the bread and wine and repeated the words of the tradition: 'Take and eat this. . .this is my body which will be given up for you.' And then 'take this all of you and drink from it this is the chalice of my blood. . . which shall be shed for you and for all. . .' Then, holding up the plate of bread and a glass of the wine, I continued:

Levantamos en alto el símbolo de
Jesús que es la señal de victoria de
los oprimidos contra los poderosos.
Su triunfo es un manifiesto que nos
llama a solidarizarnos para desterrar
el crimen y el poder arbitario.
En esta pasión queremos vivir unidos
a los que ahora intentan conquistar
el honor arrebatado.

We lift up on high the symbol
of Jesus which is the sign of victory of
the oppressed against the powerful.
His triumph is a manifesto which calls us
to solidarity with each other in order to
banish crime and arbitrary power.
In that passion we wish to live united
to those who now intend to win back
the honour torn away.

Juan Carlos:

Junto a la cruz victoriosa proclamamos
el triunfo de los derrotados,
afirmando que la sangre de los justos
es semilla de hombres nuevos.

Together at the victorious cross
we proclaim the triumph of those who have
been beaten, affirming that the blood of the
just is the seed of a new people.

And finally I brought this part of the liturgy to an end with the words:

Alzamos el cáliz de tanto sacrificio
y brindimos por ti, Padre,
dandote honor and gloria, por los
siglos de los siglos.

We lift up the chalice of so much sacrifice
and offer it for you, Father,
giving you honour and glory,
for ever and ever.

With this customary cue the gathered assembly shouted with one voice: 'Amen'.

II

THE CHRISTIAN MYTH

In the Catholic Church Calendar, Holy week is a time of high liturgical drama which has been developed over the centuries and which recalls and reinforces the central and founding myths of the Christian religion. Most of the major themes which define Christian belief emanate from the re-telling of these events. The whole story line is replete with an irony which makes the liturgical rituals events filled with a powerful and persuasive imagery for the believer.

Palm Sunday, in the tradition, introduces the theme of the 'Kingship' of Jesus who enters Jerusalem greeted by the ordinary people as a messianic figure (meanwhile the powerful political figures plot behind the scenes). This is juxtaposed with the events of the following Friday, 'Good Friday', with the execution of this figure as a common criminal. The death, however, has a special significance, for like the practice of sending a sheep out into the desert to its fate, symbolically charged with the sins of the people, or the sacrificial offering of a lamb in the temple as atonement to God for sins, so the killing of Jesus is understood as a voluntary human sacrifice carrying the same social burden. This death forever removed the need for further sacrifices of atonement because this was the perfect sacrifice. Perfect because this figure is no less than God's son. This apparent paradox is resolved in the irony that the murdered and pathetic figure hanging upon the cross, the central Christian icon, is really divine. Furthermore, while people attempt to restore their relationship with God through impersonal sacrificial means, God chooses to do the same with his own son as sign of a greater commitment to be united with the human condition. The full resolution of the paradox emerges on the following Sunday, Easter Sunday, when the executed figure of Jesus appears, risen from the dead, as evidence of God's forgiveness of humankind. A sign that despite all the evil in the world the final outcome is victory for those who believe. All the negative forces of history, even death itself, are overcome.

The development of this myth, of course, has its initial roots not just in the basic events as described by the gospel writers and Roman writers such as Tertullian and Pliny but more concretely in the events related to the attempted overthrow of the Roman occupation of Israel in 70 c.e. when the Temple was destroyed and the main Jewish parties were disarticulated. The Jewish/Christian sect (under Peter) found itself in a moment of general social and political upheaval which presented it with the opportunity to establish itself as a significant movement especially in the diaspora (under Paul). The imagery of victory despite persecution, and life despite death became sustaining metaphors and a discourse which, through good luck and management, saw this develop to become a major world movement.

The events of Palm Sunday form the first movement in the annual re-enactment of these key events in the Christian myth of redemption. The procession through the streets symbolizes the 'triumphant entry of Jesus into

Jerusalem' by the act of walking from a neutral place to the Church and by the carrying of palm branches which, in the original story, were placed as a carpet of leaves before the feet of the donkey carrying Jesus. Some *poblaciones* would even go as far as making the priest ride upon a donkey during the procession. However, as the donkeys often decided not to cooperate in the required liturgical fashion we opted for a less dramatic though more dependable version.

THE MAIN ACTORS

The liturgy of the CEB of Lo Errazuriz followed the universal form of the Catholic Church to such a degree that a Catholic visitor would immediately recognize the familiar movement and tone. Nevertheless, such a visitor might detect unusual nuances in the details, belying the familiarity of the spectacle with suspicions of certain non-compliance with the accepted, universal model.

On the one hand we have what is often termed the popular religious dimension, in this case represented by the possession of palm leaves which have been ritually blessed. The devotional aspect of these 'blessed palms' which, when displayed in the house, bring a vague and undefined sense of protection to the household, would probably not be the point that would most attract the attention to such an observer. After all this practice, although not promoted or sanctioned in these terms by the official Church, would in fact be quite familiar to many Roman Catholics throughout the world. The unsettling part of this ceremony would be the equanimity with which people engaged in the private dipping of leaves into a bowl of 'holy water' as an alternative to attending the liturgy itself, in this way seeming to turn a devotional rite into one suspiciously magical.

On the other hand the observer familiar with the Roman rite would be struck not only by the unauthorised 'Eucharist prayer' but by its overtly political imagery. Indeed, an uninformed observer might even be led to feel some sympathy in the walk-out of the women from the *Centro de Madres*, little realising that their objection was due less to the unofficial use of alternative, liturgical rites than to the imputed criticism of the Regime which it contained.

In fact the liturgy of Palm Sunday neatly mirrored the main features of the Catholic Church at that time in Chile. In the first place there was the vast majority who, while describing themselves as Catholics, were only so in the

sense that they were baptised (an essential rite of childhood). This majority steadfastly refused to participate in the organised Church except on their own terms. Which usually meant that the Church was the place where the children were to be baptised soon after birth, where they made their first communion, about the age of twelve, where they were married and finally under the auspices of which they were buried. This model of Church participation is cynically described amongst many clergy in the English-speaking world as the 'hatch, match and dispatch' kind of religion. Only a small minority of these would have actually been present during the Palm procession although there would be a wider interest in obtaining the blessed palms.

Insofar as these people were in fact the majority of the población they became not only the target audience for the 'drama' of the Palm Sunday procession, but also for the more ambiguous kind of procession like the one to the field of the dead, and, of course, the audience of the marches through the *población* in the lead up to the protests. They were also the target of the community-building activities of the CEB throughout the normal working week.

The next important group represented in the liturgy of that Sunday, were those who had made some form of transition from the popular religiosity of the majority and who would participate in certain CEB events without necessarily making any firm commitment on a long term basis. Many would attend the weekly Eucharistic service and might even participate in one of the group activities of the CEB. The political commitment, however, was not always entirely clear and it is almost certain that many were determined that it should remain so. This group were the ones that could function in the ambiguity of the politicised religious events while still insisting that they never got mixed up in politics. Ambiguity was the insurance policy for this group. Even for those of us who knew them well and sometimes worked intimately with them, it was often impossible to predict how they would react in a given situation. Indeed the practiced ambiguity of this section of the Catholics in the *población* made it difficult to know where to locate any particular individual on a scale between political commitment and ordinary faithful membership of the a-political universal Church. Nevertheless, this was the immediate key group for the future development of a more politically militant Church. In practice there was much movement along the scale of commitment depending on the national political climate at the time; but on the whole, there was a tendency

for a slow move towards the political end of the spectrum as the years moved on. In other words there was a slow but significant overt politicisation of many people represented here.

The third group active in the Palm Sunday event was of course the *Pinochetistas*, the supporters of the government of Pinochet. This group followed the official government line that religion was a spiritual domain that had neither place nor voice in the material and mundane. '*Pastelero a sus pasteles*', cakemaker to your cakes (cobblers to their lasts) was a favourite saying of Pinochet, usually directed at the politicised Catholic Church.

This group of Pinochet supporters was, of course, composed of people with mixed motives. Some were genuine political supporters of the military intervention of 1973 and actually believed that the military had saved the nation from communism. Others, I suspect, preferred simply to follow the winning side, sadly disguising their own fear of being accused of opposition or of losing what little security they had in their lives of poverty. Some members of this group, especially in times of political crisis for Pinochet, were bribed to attend rallies in his support. Others would go along seduced by the kudos of power by proxy or in the belief that to be seen as being close to the regime was the best insurance from its dangers. In any case, whether by conviction or convenience, this group represented a clear and present danger to the security of other *pobladores* because it was amongst this group that the security forces would recruit for the gathering of local intelligence. On the day in question some would be present for the purpose of mischief, others either out of a popular religious conviction or from a conservative Roman Catholic perspective. This latter sub-group served a double function as representing both the presence of Pinochet in the *poblaciones* and at the same time representing the conservative views of various, right-wing Catholic organisations opposed not only to a Church with a liberation perspective, but also to the mainstream Church which had adopted the modest changes of Vatican II since 1960. The influence of these groups in the *población* was small but nevertheless dangerous given their intimate relationship with the Regime.

The fourth group in this kaleidoscope of different religious perspectives was of course the CEB. Here was the bed-rock of the official Church presence in the area (although increasingly at odds with the hierarchy of Santiago which

began a move to the right from the mid 1980's). The CEB was, of course, itself an amalgam of various religious perspectives. For many, the important point was the 'Churchness' of this experience. These would often be people who chose to participate in the activity of the Church on a regular basis and, out of a sense of loyalty, participated in the particular model of liberationist ecclesiology because this was the only official model available (the presence of a priest being the guarantee of officialdom). Many would just as comfortably have participated in a more orthodox model of Church although, some would start from this position but over the years gradually moved into a commitment which went beyond this 'mere membership' mode of participation.

Others, who under normal circumstances would have eschewed participation in the Church, were attracted by the fact that here was an anti-regime activity that had certain elements of security because of its official Church function and thus, not easily controlled by the military. The political dimension was the key to their participation and their religious belief would contain elements from the popular religiosity of their upbringing to a more philosophical position derived from the theology of liberation.

Yet others would find themselves placed somewhere on a spectrum between these two positions and indeed might actually change their stance according to the pressures of the moment. The general movement of the CEB, however, was towards a more explicit political option helped along in no small measure by the ability of Liberation Theology to provide an alternative political discourse.

III

RELIGION AS REFLECTION OF SOCIETY

If we compare this picture of religion at work in the *población* with Durkheim's attempt to define religion as:

> a unified set of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden, - beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a church, all those who adhere to them (1964:37);

some interesting observations emerge. This definition in fact consists of two parts: firstly the substantive element where he defines religion as "a unified

system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things"; and secondly its functional element - "which unite into a single moral community. . . all those who adhere to them" (Dobbelaere and Lauwers, 1973:537). Applied to the events of that Palm Sunday we can see that this definition is problematic because while it would appear to provide an explanation for the activity of some of the groups, the cohesive collectivity which Durkheim proposes only seems to work, in this instance at least, at a generalised descriptive, that is to say, most superficial, level of analysis. If we engage in a deeper analysis and begin to take into account the various meanings imputed by the different groupings to the one event then we then begin to detect that this liturgical drama, far from unifying and uniting, is one that is being contested - the practice of the universal Church by the particular local form, the CEB theology by the popular religiosity, the pro-Pinochet by the anti-Pinochet. The social solidarity which Durkheim believed religion promoted seems absent in the clash of images and ideologies. And yet, paradoxically, the religious event is the stage upon which the disparate views are at least gathered together under the banner of 'Church', where the liturgy provides a common action if not common meaning. This gathering together is potentially cohesive and in fact did succeed in some small measure in creating a sense of unity amongst a large group of people. However, this solidarity was, for many, merely a fleeting phenomenon, pregnant with possibilities perhaps, but fruitful only in a limited sense.

The further claim of Durkheim that the primary object of religion "is not to give men a representation of the physical world. . . it is a system of ideas with which the individuals represent to themselves the society of which they are members" (1964:225) appears, in an ironic sense, to perfectly reflect the Chilean religiosity of that time. What we observe in the contest of meanings at work that day is no more than the contested state of Chilean society played out within the events of the liturgy.

Durkheim's claim then that 'God is . . . a figurative expression of society' (1964:226) is only vindicated with a more nuanced understanding of what precisely we mean by the term 'society' in the first place. The problem with Durkheim's argument, as Morris points out, is:

> the status of his central concept, "society" which he sees as a homogeneous entity but never, in fact, defines. The notion that a society, whether an ethnic group or nation, may be divided into social

> categories based on sex, class, status or ethnic affiliation never seems to have occurred to Durkheim (1987:122).

In a similar way, Durkheim neglects the ideological function of religion which might legitimize the domination of one group over another (Giddens, 1978:30; Morris, 1987:122; Glock, 1965:156). None of this should be surprising given Durkheim's emphasis on religion as promoting social cohesion, although as Giddens points out (1989:462) this does not necessarily devalue his focus. After all internal cohesion will often be partly expressed in negative and conflictive terms against the 'other'. This is certainly true of the Palm Sunday liturgy and as we can see, the negative and conflictive terms remain unresolved. Religion in this sense is a process through which social cohesion appears to be a desired end but one unfortunately 'devoutly to be wished' rather than accomplished. The question which emerges in the particular example under examination is: on whose terms is the social cohesion to be achieved?

For Marx the 'cohesion' wrought by religion was neither good nor neutral and certainly not simply a reflection of society. For him religion was a tool of domination deliberately promoted by and reflective of the interests of the dominant group. As he and Engels pointed out it provides comfort for the oppressed masses in the sense that:

> Religious distress is at the same time the expression of real distress and a protest against real distress. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of the heartless world, just as it is the spirit of a spiritless situation (Marx and Engels, 1957: 38).

However, this 'narcotic' value of religion is illusory because it does not attend to the very situation which gives rise to the need for such an illusion. Therefore:

> the abolition of religion as the illusory happiness of the people is required for their real happiness. The demand to give up the illusions about its condition is the demand to give up a condition which needs illusions (1957: 38).

For a truly cohesive society free of the contradictions of class struggle, religion is at best an obstacle, and its disappearance a necessary pre-condition, for the transformation of society. The criticism of religion he wrote:

> is therefore the germ of the criticism of the valley of tears whose halo is religion. . . . The criticism of heaven is thus transformed into the criticism of earth, the criticism of religion into the criticism of law, and the criticism of theology into the criticism of politics (Marx, 1977:63).

What Marx failed to foresee was the capacity of certain elements within religious institutions themselves not only for self-criticism but, through renewed religious imagery, for the kind of criticism of society with which Marx himself would probably have felt at home. Ultimately Marx might prove to be correct and, as Engels forecast, religion might well disappear (see Mclellan, 1987:33-57) when:

> man no longer merely proposes, but also disposes - only then will the last alien force which is still reflected in religion vanish; and with it will also vanish the religious reflection itself, for the simple reason that then there will be nothing left to reflect (Engels, 1954:438).

All we can say is that in the Latin America of the latter half of the twentieth century a religious discourse in the form of Liberation Theology emerged which might have at least given him some pause for thought (Although, paradoxically, we might allow the question as to whether Liberation Theology would have existed at all without Marx). However, while the liberationist perspective of the CEB might have surprised Marx, the passivity of the majority as well as the promotion of the values of the oppressor by the smaller group, would have been familiar to him. What we see here is not that the Marxian view of religion was wrong, but rather how it did not foresee that the theological enterprise could develop a theory which reflected not an alienated humanity but one engaged in the very struggle envisaged by Marx. Religion could also be viewed not as an obstacle to change but also harnessed as an agent of change.

RELIGION AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF SOCIETY

It was the question of change which also interested Max Weber. However, unlike Marx, he did not believe it useful to explain historical changes merely in terms of adaptation to the material world, or economic factors (Giddens, 1989: 638). For him there were factors at play other than the economic which also influence the course of events including military power, modes of government and ideologies (ibid: 639). Within his perspective of society understood as 'an arena of conflicting interest groups or strata' (Morris, 1987: 79), he attributed some scope to the capacity of religion to influence social

change rather than provide justification for the maintenance of a *status quo* and, in this sense, he saw it as capable of producing major impact upon society, for better or for worse. Indeed his study, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* was, in part, an investigation into the 'influence of certain religious ideas on the development of the economic spirit, or the *ethos* of an economic system' (Weber,1976:27). Here he saw Calvinism, with its doctrine of predestination, as contributing to the conditions out of which modern capitalism was to grow. The religious anxiety induced by the knowledge that only a few are to be 'eternally saved', far from inducing a fatalistic attitude in the believers with their feelings of unprecedented inner loneliness of the single individual (1976:104), in fact produced an attitude of intense worldly activity. This, as Weber commented, means that 'God helps those who help themselves. Thus the Calvinist, as it is sometimes put, creates his own salvation, or, as would be more correct, the conviction of it' (1976:115). There was a turning of attention from the mystical and the emotional to the 'idea of the necessity of proving one's faith in worldly activity' (1976:121). All this, of course, is not to imply that the Protestant ethic 'caused' capitalism but it did constitute a 'radical cultural break with tradition' (Moore, 1971:85; see Morris, 1987:61-68). The concern of Weber was not the origins of capitalism as much as the origins of the capitalist mentality.

Of course, predestination as a doctrine is found in different forms in the Catholic Church. Indeed, the very fact that the Church has been able to accept and even promote the existence of different economic classes, failing to promote and protect the rights of indigenous populations, and ignoring the questions of unequal gender relations (exclusion of women from power within its ranks) has itself given succour to the Capitalist enterprise. Indeed we might say that this has been more important over a longer period for the sustenance of the dominant Capitalist system than the 'work ethic', as described by Weber, has ever been. As Gutiérrez says:

> . . . the Church is tied to the prevailing social system. In many places the Church contributes to creating a "Christian order" and to giving a kind of scared character to a situation which is not only alienating but is the worst kind of violence - a situation which pits the powerful against the weak.(Gutiérrez, 1974:265).

For the Church to abandon this position would be to make itself vulnerable, a position to which it is not exactly accustomed in the context of Latin America.

Furthermore, there are consequences for going down this road, as Gutiérrez goes on to say:

> The groups that control economic and political power will not forgive the Church for this. They will withdraw their support, which is the principle source of the ambiguous social prestige which the Church enjoys in Latin America today (Gutiérrez, 1974:266).

In Latin America the dominant groups have always seen the importance of incorporating the Church into their strategies for power; and, thus, as Boff points out:

> The religious-ecclesiastical realm is strongly pressured to organize itself in such a way that it is adjusted to the interests of the classes, a pressure that takes the form of economic, juridical, political, cultural, and even repressive measures. In this way the Church serves a conservative and legitimating function for the ruling classes (Boff, 1986(a):112).

Indeed we can say that the very structure of the Catholic Church replicates the inequalities of power found in a society with clearly defined social classes. The class of experts, specialists and functionaries which have emerged over the centuries have claimed the exclusive right to produce the 'symbolic goods to be consumed by the now dispossessed people (1986(a):113).

Holy week, as a re-enactment of historical/mythical events, has traditionally been rich in the symbols intended not only to invoke social imagery but also social emotion. The image of a suffering Jesus who dies uncomplaining upon his cross, who accepts physical and psychological indignities, who is innocent and a victim of injustice becomes, in the hands of a Church tied to the dominant system, a model for Christian to follow. Acceptance of suffering, faith that redemption is found in the after life, become a 'spirituality' for those whose daily experience is suffering and whose horizons appear to offer little hope. Here, in this belief in the cross, lies comfort that God understands their suffering (even more so the Virgin), and, who knows, he might feel such compassion that if they pray and bargain with him, he might even invoke his power to transform that suffering.

It is interesting that there is a wide practice throughout Latin America (as in other predominantly catholic countries throughout the world) to attempt to

gain God's favour by inflicting even more suffering upon one's self. For example, the pilgrimages to certain shrines, the final stages of which must completed on the knees, walking barefoot over stony ground, walking long distances, or fasting, all serve to re-inforce the salvific quality of suffering even in the appeal for its relief. The corollary is the perceived virtues of the faithful as being obedient, submissive, respective of the hierarchy (unquestioning), and humble. After all what is one's own suffering when compared with that of Jesus on the cross.

Holy Week, as it follows the steps from triumphant entry into Jerusalem, through the betrayal, arrest and torture of Jesus, as it takes up the 'way of the cross' following him as he is forced to carry the instrument of his own death, as he is jeered and spat upon and, finally, as he dies slowly only to forgive in his last breath, is a veritable factory of imagery that defines the relationship of the poor to those in power. Ultimately, the dominant classes are unconcerned about whether the poor love them, it is enough that they accept their lot.

Liberation Theologians suggest a different use of the imagery that flows from these events. Here we find an even more focused attention upon the imagery of suffering, however, the emphasis is not upon the suffering of the individual but rather upon the suffering of a people. The fundamental focus is not upon the death of Jesus *per se*, but rather upon the 'death of the oppressed one', the one who suffers unjustly. The notion that there are two histories, one sacred and one profane are rejected. The suffering of the poor will not be redeemed within another kind of history that goes beyond death, but rather in the one history that all human subjects share.

The imagery of Holy Week is thus transformed from that which promotes acceptance of suffering to that which calls its necessity into question; from that which see suffering as a means of 'salvation' to that which sees it as the product of 'sinful' structures that must be challenged and transformed. The silence of Jesus on the cross becomes not a model of quiescence but rather a living (dying) example of the suffering of a people that can no longer be hidden. The reality of suffering is exposed, not for its contemplation but for its transformation. In the hands of Liberation Theology it is not Jesus who is put on trial but his accusers, his death is a judgement upon them. But it is also a challenge for the disciples, the message not being acceptance, but rather a

questioning of how far would they be prepared to go in their struggle to transform humankind (Nolan,1976: 132-3).

The imagery of courage begins to emerge, that of acceptance to recede; the imagery of questioning, of challenge begins to take shape, that of resignation begins to dissolve; the imagery of being a people united in oppression begins to take hold, that of being an individual lost in suffering is exposed as merely a version preferred by the oppressor.

Indeed, I would argue that the role of Liberation Theology in the *población* was that of providing a new, working language which enabled the people to explore the imagery of familiar stories like that of Holy Week. Exploring it they could attempt to find new meaning. With renewed meaning they had another symbolic *repertoire* at their disposal to search out ways in common to overcome the limitations and suffering imposed by the dominant system.

A QUESTION OF AUTHORITY

The tensions present in the Church ceremony of Palm Sunday discloses a situation in which is to be found both the desire for the maintenance of orthodoxy and its transformation. Ultimately the struggle of meanings going on is not merely of theological concern but one that points to the important role played by religion at that political conjuncture. This was of great importance for Pinochet insofar as religion had implications for the legitimation of the regime.

Only with the most tenuous casuistry could the military justify their intervention in legal and constitutional terms, their action being a clear rupture of that process. It has been suggested that an important element in the promotion of a propitious climate for a military coup was the dismay of the Chilean upper classes at the fact that the 'lower orders' under Allende were threatening their world. As O'Brien states:

> This hatred went much deeper than the traditional anti-communism of the Latin American ruling classes. There was a feeling that something radical had to be done to remove for ever the fearful spectre of the lower classes seizing power (O'Brien, 1985: 148).

As a result we find Pinochet attempting to root his claims to legitimacy in appeals to 'destiny', of having been chosen in this hour of danger for the

nation. The kind of terms he would often use to describe the military intervention would be replete with words like 'heroic', 'glorious' and 'sacrifice'. As time moved on these claims became increasingly directed to the person of Pinochet himself until he could claim in 1985 that in Chile 'not one leaf moves unless I move it'. The propaganda machine even promoted his ascetic life style and his expertise in the martial arts, as evidence of a man who was dedicated and disciplined in a way that was above and beyond the ordinary.

Certain sectors of Chilean political life were content to work within a legal framework of authority while actually believing that this authority was a privilege of only a certain section of Chilean society, specifically their own. Amongst the democratic political parties the one where this view found most resonance was the National Party. Here a non-democratic wing saw that their opportunity for power lay in supporting the *gremialismo* movement (representing the corporate interests of employers and professionals, certain women's sectors along with various youth movements as well as some parts of the labour movement). In this way the effective political leadership slipped away from the democratic element of the National Party. Of course, those who gave unconditional support to Pinochet did not need to rest their argument in rule by a chosen elite, when they could achieve the same result from assuring that the guiding principles of the economic strategy were to reduce the role of the state and the exercise of political power to that of 'neutral technification':

> State decisions were meant to be 'technical', free from civil society pressures. Indeed there was a process whereby the leadership of the main capitalist pressure groups became a pressure group for the state, their role being to persuade their constituent members of the rightness of the government's policies and to defuse potential protests. . . (O'Brien :167-168).

It would have been of enormous help for the regime to have been able to count on the support of the Church to legitimize this process. After all the Catholic Church did indeed see itself as having authority based on its traditional role in the political affairs of Latin America. Two years after Columbus landed in the Americas, in the treaty of Tordesillas, the Pope decreed that Spain and Portugal could divide up the New World, with a mission to evangelize the heathen (Green, 1991:171). The Church supported the colonialist enterprise and in return became the official religion. Although

this relationship was shaken during the independence wars of the early 19th century, and again, later in that century, when the Church paid a price for being too enthusiastic in its support for the elite ruling groups when Liberal reformers severed the Church-state relationship (1991 :173). The Catholic Church, nevertheless, still retained important influence in state affairs even if it was confined to that of 'blessing or withholding blessing'. The claim to authority made by the Church was not to govern itself, but was in fact to legitimize government. At times of doubt this authority could serve as a moral court of appeal.

No one could doubt the capacity of the Regime to enforce its will by sheer military might. The problem was to ensure that this authority was accepted as legitimate.

For Pinochet the route to legitimacy lay, in large measure, in his attempt to form a new written Constitution which would enshrine the image of the new Chilean society which his Regime envisaged. The one problem with this was that the very process of establishing such a Constitution had itself to be seen as having a legitimate foundation. To impose a Constitution merely by force would be unlikely to achieve a legitimacy that would outlast the dictator. Not only that; insofar as the present authority rested entirely upon the leader and his agents, then any failure by them would become a failure of the system. The longer the period of illegitimacy the more chance that failures would inevitably bleed away that authority.

It was important, therefore, for Pinochet to win some kind of approval for his actions that went beyond his own supporters and be sufficient to be able to claim that the subsequent implementation of a Constitution had been achieved by legitimate means.

We can already see this concern for legitimacy at work as early as the plebiscite held on January 4 1978, when the people were asked to vote, yes or no, to the statement:

> Faced with international aggression launched against our Fatherland, I support President Pinochet in his defence of the dignity of Chile and reaffirm the legitimacy of the government (Constable and Valenzuela, 1991:68).

On the ballot paper the 'yes' was accompanied by a Chilean flag, the 'no' by a black box. The votes were counted in private inside the Ministry of the Interior with blank votes counting as 'yes'. Pinochet won the plebiscite.

From this point onwards he pressed ahead with his project for a new Constitution by setting up a group to produce a Charter. By the middle of 1978, a draft was produced which banned Marxist groups, created a powerful executive, a partially appointed Congress and gave the armed forces a permanent legal channel for influencing important government policy decisions (ibid: 71-72). This document was sent to the Council of State, an advisory body headed by former President Jorge Allessandri. However, surprisingly, this body changed a number of important items including an elected Congress and Presidential elections in 1985. Pinochet was not pleased with these suggestions which, far from legitimating his long rule, actually put it at risk. In a secret process he ordered a rewriting of the Charter to include a provision for extending his period as President for a further sixteen years. When Allesandri objected, a formula was finally agreed whereby, after the plebiscite conforming the new constitution, Pinochet would govern for eight years. After this period a referendum would be held for which he and other military commanders would agree upon a sole candidate who would be President for a further eight years. Allesandri resigned from the Council of State. Pinochet announced a Constitutional Plebiscite for September 11 1980 (ibid:72).

It is obvious that the process itself was still flawed and open to criticism. For this reason it was necessary for Pinochet to find some prior legitimacy in popular support to allay such criticism. It was in this that the importance of the Church lay. With the Church on his side, playing its role as guardian of traditional values, the task of popular legitimacy would have been a much easier task. Unfortunately for him the Catholic Church, under the leadership of Cardinal Raúl Silva Henriquez, refused to play this role, preferring to support the claims of the democratic parties.

Faced with a Church clearly aligned with the opposition, Pinochet sought to improve his standing through a process of intimidation designed to prevent the growth of political organisation, propaganda designed to paint a picture of Chile as a haven of peace and harmony interrupted only by 'yesterdays politicians still hungry for power' and hand-in-glove with political delinquents,

and by patronage and bribery aimed at winning over significant numbers of ordinary people to the Pinochet camp.

It was in this climate, especially in the poor *barrios* of the major cities, that the role of Liberation Theology began to play an important part in not only ensuring that no blessing was given to Pinochet's projects but actually to undermine, in the people's imagination, the legitimacy that he sought.

IV

HOLY THURSDAY

At eight pm. the people began to gather in the small chapel for the second major movement of Holy Week. This was to be the traditional Eucharist of the last supper which recalls the events in the myth when Jesus, knowing that the authorities were closing in on him and that he was about to be arrested, held a farewell supper with his closest disciples. Amongst these was Judas who was to betray his whereabouts.

The striking difference between this Eucharist and the normal weekly ceremony was the fact that the benches for the congregation were formed in a circle around a long table set for 13 places, each with a plate and a glass (although no cutlery). In the centre of the table was a dish with a number of bread rolls and a bottle of wine. A series of candles served to complete the appearance of a table set for a meal. Nobody actually sat directly at the table, including the president of the liturgy (myself). Rather, everyone sat around it, and by implication at it, in a symbolic manner.

The celebration itself proceeded more or less like the normal Sunday liturgy. The various biblical readings reflecting the traditional story of the 'Last Supper'. It was at this meal that, according to this tradition, Jesus took the bread and said: "Take this all of you and eat it. This is my body which will be given up for you". Later in the meal he took a cup of wine and said: "Take this all of you and drink from it. This is the cup of my blood, the blood of the new and eternal covenant which shall be shed for you and for all so that sins may be forgiven. In this the intended theological symbolism of orthodoxy directs the believer towards an attitude of nearness, of intimacy with a deity close in time and space. The bread and wine are transformed in significance and become a direct communion with God. In orthodox theology this 'Eucharist'

plays a crucial role in the literal sense of being the crux of the faith system. This 'sacrament' is a direct contact with God here and now. A God brought from the far away place of heaven.

The seriousness implied in this belief appeared almost contradicted at the moment of 'communion' when, according to the ritual, people eat and drink the bread and wine which are the mediation of the divine presence. There was much confusion as people pushed and squeezed their way to the table to take a piece of the rolls which had been broken up and shared amongst the thirteen plates, and to take a sip of the wine which had been shared out into the thirteen glasses. As was the custom of this drama of Holy Week some of the bread and some of the wine had been set apart.

The ceremony concluded in a way that was unique to this Holy Thursday Eucharist and one that would be repeated in thousands of Churches all over the world. Because, just as Jesus moved from the meal with some of his closest disciples to the Garden of Gethsemane where he was to be arrested, so a section of each Church (away from the main altar where the previous mass had occurred) is decorated with flowers and the left over bread and wine are carried solemnly to 'rest' there until midnight.

In our case it was the job of *Sra Blanca* and *La Mirta* to prepare a corner of the chapel for this. In this task, as always, they were assisted by their daughters and one or two of the older women. They always made up the same design - long flowing pieces of net curtain hanging above and falling around a small table around and below which were placed bunches of flowers and potted plants.

As the Eucharist came to an end and, with the bread and wine transported to this 'garden' by Lucho, an unorthodox note was added to the universal ceremony. It was my task to explain that the following day, Good Friday, the usual stations of the cross would take place in the city. Many of the *Comunidades de Base* would meet under their individual banners for a procession through the streets. At key points the procession would stop to remember an injustice that had occurred at that particular spot, a murder of a union leader here, the disappearance of a another person there. Each place a 'station' on the road evoking the series of events that occurred to Jesus as he carried his cross to his place of execution. This station of the cross, a familiar

ritual to Catholics world-wide, had been transformed here into a political commentary as it catalogued a series of abuses of the 'way of suffering' of the Chilean people. This Good Friday procession, usually managed to gather together two thousand or more members of the communities, inevitably attracting the attention of the authorities. Not long after the very first of these Stations of the cross I wrote the following in a report sent back to Europe:

It is Good-Friday - 9.30am. 2,500 people from the working class Christian Communities walk in a procession led by the Episcopal Vicars, behind a huge 10 ft cross, along one of the busiest central roads of the city. The people carry placards of protest with words from the Bible or from the documents of Puebla. Each priest leads the Christian Community to which they belong. The cross has written across it the words: "Jesus Christ Crucified in the Working Class". It is a reaction to mass unemployment and wages reduced to inhuman levels. The people on this 'way of the cross' for the most part, say nothing, shout nothing. They hum a tune and occasionally sing the words, always the same words: "Father, listen to the cry of your people. Father, listen, come and save us". The 'way of the cross' lasts for four hours. Almost from the start the police arrive armed with sub-machine guns to disperse what is an illegal demonstration. They read the placards and are confused. They do not know what to do. They have long conversations over their radios with their superiors. Two bus-loads of police reinforcements arrive, but the people simply ignore them and continue their march. The police follow. We notice that the CNI (the secret police) have arrived - they just sit there, wearing their 'uniform' of Ray-Ban Aviator sun glasses, watching the column of people pass by. One of them produces a camera and takes pictures. I suspect that this is intended to be some kind of intimidatory message. The people we pass on the way look on with amazement, some with consternation, others fearful. This sort of thing is not permitted. The way of the cross has only four stations and finally ends without incident. However as the groups disperse the police seem to select a few people and move in to arrest them. People begin to run away. A chant begins from a street corner: "*Recuerda! Carabinero tu padre era obrero*" (remember Carabinero your father was a worker). Tear gas is fired and we move away from the area as fast as possible to shouts of "*No corran!*" (Don't run) by the more experienced hands at these things. This calms down the atmosphere. Later, discussing this event, far from feeling intimidated by the police presence and the tear gas incident the participants believe that this confirmed that the "stations of the cross" must have been a significant political event.

It was in this context that, on the Holy Thursday, as a last act the people were invited to take a small purple cross cut out of card from a basket which had been placed on the table; to write their names on the back and to take them to the 'garden' on their way home as a sign of their commitment that the following day they would meet, early in the morning, to set off as a

Community to the Stations of the Cross in the city. The next morning each cross would be retrieved by its owner and pinned over the heart.

The rest of that Thursday evening was spent in my adjoining house making the placards carrying the usual, ambiguous biblical messages of protest. Meanwhile, up until midnight, there would be a steady trickle of people coming back to the 'garden' to spend a short time in private reflection, or listening to the occasional recitations from the Bible and from the homilies of Oscar Romero (the assassinated Salvadorean Archbishop) that would be read by Lucho and two or three other people whose task it was to oversee the otherwise silent vigil. At midnight, the placards having been prepared for the next day's outing, a group of about forty people gathered at the 'garden'. Without further introduction or comment Jorge read the story of the arrest of Jesus. Everyone went home in silence.

V

THE BANNING OF POLITICS - A SACRED MISSION

In Chile, as in much of Latin America, religion matters. Even if the vast majority of people rarely attend Church on a regular basis religion and religious imagery play an important part in their lives. Even for the military it was important to show that their overthrow of Allende was the consequence of a higher calling. Destiny had placed them in this position in order to save Chile from Marxist atheism. Pinochet in particular had this sense of being called to a sacred mission. In 1986, when the Communist resistance group the FPMR failed in their attempt to assassinate him, he appeared on television within hours, standing next to his car bearing signs of the armed assault. The armour plated window next to where he had been sitting at the time of the attack had cracked in a pattern in which, he insisted for the cameras, could clearly be seen the image of *La Virgen* who had personally intervened to save him. Even if he did not believe it (and my hunch is that he did) he obviously considered it politically advantageous to be able to claim divine protection.

With the suspension of all political parties and the banning of all political activity Pinochet aimed to create the space and time to be able to destroy the old political structures. However, the Catholic Church presented him with a

particular problem. To have insisted upon incorporating the Church into this transformation would have been against the wishes of many of the armed forces, especially the officer class, many of whom were not only Catholics but Catholics of a conservative character. There were also the mysterious civilians who had been working behind the scenes before the coup and later as advisers to the military government. Some of these were members of extreme right wing Catholic organisations such as Opus Dei and the FTP (Family, Tradition and Property). Although convinced that the Church was infiltrated by "Communists" it was unthinkable to them that as an institution it could be oppressed in the same way as the political parties. In any case it was assumed in the early days of the coup that the official Church would eventually come to play its traditional role of supporting the status quo. After all it had been critical of much of Allende's programme of socialist reform. In fact these suppositions were partly right insofar as during the first few days, although the Church became increasingly vociferous in denouncing human rights abuses, it remained silent about the morality of the coup itself. Only when it became clear that there was to be no hand-over to 'democratic' rule did the relationship between Church and State become one of opposition.

However, the banning of national politics and the violent repression of members of left wing parties resulted in unforeseen consequences. Although many activists simply withdrew from political life, others found that their energies could be dispersed to less visible levels in their local areas. It was here that the incipient local Christian communities (CEB's) inspired by the theology of liberation, found themselves in a position to absorb the activists from the political parties (Mainwaring, 1986; Levine, 1987: 558-9).

It was from within these communities that political development was to continue during the subsequent years and which eventually culminated in the mass protests which I have described. However, it would be a mistake to assume that the only role for these CEB's was merely to act as surrogate space for the continuing discourse of the parties. In fact the theology of liberation itself became a major political discourse and critique of the situation of oppression. In this sense the poor sectors of the cities, sites of a discourse of domination, of oppression, poverty and fear were also sites of an alternative discourse: of liberation, of resistance, and within the currency of common religious language - hope.

LIBERATION THEOLOGY - A POLITICAL MISSION

The structures of the political parties were considerably weakened if not entirely destroyed and the optimistic rhetoric of revolution had been stilled with the total failure of the much vaunted popular resistance in the face of the military takeover (Constable and Valenzuela, 1991:18). For the next few years the images and language of religion were to become the only viable expressions of public political expression, where ritual and liturgical action became the most common vehicles for political opposition and where Church organisation was the only visible and mass expression of political organisation. Religion, the opium of the people as described by Marx, was paradoxically to become the space where a discourse of liberation could be nurtured, kept alive and developed.

The emergence of Liberation theology in Latin America effectively began in the sixties. The various currents attempting to articulate a theological response to the injustices experienced in the Latin American situation were galvanised in the Roman Catholic Church by the 1968 meeting of the Conference of Latin American Bishops (Celam) held in Medellín, Colombia. The purpose of this meeting was to formulate a response from the Latin American context to the World-wide General Council of Church renewal, usually referred to as Vatican II. Surprisingly for many, this meeting was to produce a hermeneutical starting point which, for the first time in the history of the Church, began with a wide ranging critique of systemic, structural domination described as "sinful social structure". The hope was expressed that, like the story of Moses in Exodus, the people would be liberated (Goizueta, 1988:20-21). In 1971 Gustavo Gutiérrez published his *Teologia de la Liberación* which was the first attempt at a systematic exposition of such a theology. In this he stated that:

> The theology of liberation offers us not so much a new theme for reflection as a new way to do theology. Theology as critical reflection on historical praxis is a liberating theology, a theology of the liberating transformation of the history of humankind and also therefore that part of humankind - gathered into *ecclesia* . . . This is a theology which does not stop with reflecting on the world but rather tries to be a part of the process through which the world is transformed. It is a theology which is open - in the protest against trampled human dignity, in the struggle against the plunder of the vast majority of people, in liberating love, and in the building of a new, just and fraternal society (Gutiérrez, 1974:15).

This new way of doing theology comprised an epistemological break with previous theologies, setting out a new task which was to critically examine historical action and where theology was to be seen as one moment in a much larger process of the transformation of the world and its relationships (Boff, 1989:38-39).

In Chile there was already a willing and receptive audience for this emerging theology. This included elements of the clergy and Religious Congregations of women who, during the time leading up to the election of Allende and continuing through the period of his presidency, were part of a movement calling itself Christians for Socialism. In 1971, two years before the coup, 80 priests issued a document which became known as the Declaration of the 80 which stated amongst other points:

> As Christians we do not see any incompatibility between Christianity and socialism. Quite the contrary is true. As the Cardinal of Santiago said last November: "There are more evangelical values in socialism than there are in capitalism." The fact is that socialism offers new hope that persons can be more complete, and hence more evangelical: that is more conformed to Jesus Christ, who came to liberate us from any and every sort of bondage. . .
>
> To Marxists we say that authentic religion is not the opiate of the people. It is on the contrary, a liberating stimulus to revivify and renew the world constantly. To Christians we offer a reminder that our God has been and is committed personally to the history of human beings. And we say that at this present moment loving one's neighbour basically means struggling to make this world resemble as closely as possible the future world that we hope for and that we are already in the process of constructing (Eagleston, 1975: 3-6).

The optimism of this project was severely damaged by the events of 1973. Nevertheless it was in this juxtaposition of religious and socialist imagery which produced not so much a hybrid theory as a new perspective which was to prove critical when overt political activity was eventually forbidden and repressed. Religious language and images now became metaphors for a systematic political critique. The text of religion was converted into a covert sub-text, buried deep in ambiguity at first, but gradually becoming more explicit throughout the long years of Pinochet's rule.

The importance of the theology of liberation during the following years was not so much in providing inspiration for political movements or programs. Its

political impact came 'in more indirect ways: legitimating new agendas for public discourse (human rights, economic critique); eliciting and promoting new styles of leadership; and empowering organisations' (Levine, 1987:556; see also Berryman, 1987). The implications were, in the words of Boff, that:

> Living and reflecting on faith means doing a theology of history, of human actions, of social events, of politics, and of transformations. And if this transformation is produced from the position of and in the interests of the oppressed . . .and by the oppressed themselves . . . this theology will be a theology of liberation. The theology of liberation will therefore be the theory of a particular form of action (Boff, 1989:39).

There is a turnaround in theological method and a re-ordering of the space for theological production, recognizing that 'theology lives on something greater than itself. It is not the original datum. It is the result of an attempt to express a primary and fundamental reality' (ibid; p.40). The place for the construction of theology is seen no longer the 'academy' but rather in the *favelas* and *poblaciones*, amongst the poor and oppressed. The questions which receive priority and become the motor for the development of theology are the questions posed by the people, arising from their most basic needs and their most cherished aspirations, and which emerge from their daily experiences.

The important factor was the explicit acknowledgement that theology is a social product. The important question being - whose perspective of society does it represent? The epistemological break in Liberation Theology is precisely in the fact that its perspective is one of a "Theology of the Underside of History" (Gutiérrez, 1979), the perspective of 'history's absentees'. The theological production 'seeks to reinforce their cause, legitimize their struggles and give their lives political weight' (Boff, 1989: 42).

This way of thinking found a receptive audience especially amongst many professional pastoral agents in Chile. This quickly resulted in a significant movement of these (priests and nuns) from the traditional Church centres, (parishes and schools) to the poorer areas on the outskirts of the cities. Living in poor conditions and sharing in the daily lives of the people the traditional religious discourse virtually disappeared. The topics of discussion, the themes for participation in organisations where those that emerged from the concrete needs and concerns of the people.

An outsider might be forgiven for thinking that this was merely another form of infiltration of the popular sectors from an official Church whose 'message' was not getting across. In fact this was almost certainly the operative image of many in the Church hierarchy and probably a reason why they allowed their pastoral agents to make such a move. In practice, however, what began to emerge was virtually a parallel Church with its distinct discourse, concerns and organisation. The social and political problems of the poor sectors became the major concerns of these newly contextualised pastoral agents which resulted in open co-operation with (not to say actual membership of) the local political parties which meant, in the period leading up to and including the presidency of Allende, working with the socialist and Marxist groups who were predominant in these areas.

With the banning of party political activity under Pinochet the already politicized religious structures in the *poblaciones* found themselves representing the only viable space for political organisation. However, the violence of the military repression was such that it became necessary to develop new skills in the formulation of ambiguous discourse. The Bible, never a central object of popular Roman Catholic concern (Bible reading until the sixties tended to be considered a rather Protestant practice - they had the Bible while the Catholics had the sacraments, dogma and the Pope) now became the index for a subversive text. The story of the oppressed people living under the dominion of Pharaoh in Egypt, following the leadership of Moses who, working subversively, led them to freedom, became a model and permission to struggle politically and clandestinely. The development of this theme would pick up on the fact that divine intervention destroyed Pharaoh's army and protected the people on their journey to the promised land, leading not, as might be expected, to the conclusion that God would solve the problem of Chile but rather that God was on their side, working with them and empowering them for success.

The prophets of the Bible also became models of bravery in the denunciation of oppression. Isaiah hears God saying to the rulers of Sodom and Gomorrah:

> Take your wrong-doing out of my sight. Cease to do evil. Learn to do good, search for justice, help the oppressed, be just to the orphan, plead for the widow (Isaiah 1:17).

These words, previously used to influence the morality of the Church member, now became a critical commentary on the government of Pinochet and were rarely uttered in liturgies and rituals without being accompanied by rising tension and knowing looks. The collusion of a collective, subversive hermeneutic transformed such events into political comment reinforcing political commitment and, at the same time, acting as a critique of the official Church theology as biased in favour of dominant ideologies. The Bible was seen as a text of theological domination of the Church elite which was now undergoing a new reading - by and from the perspective of the experience of the people living in the poor *barrios*. Thus a hermeneutic circle was formed where social experience formed the basis of a critical reading of the various texts and discourses of Church and State, in the light of which new forms of organisation and new understanding of experience was produced, in the light of which further criticism emerged. Each point on the circle was a site of a 'hermeneutic of suspicion' (Segundo, 1976: 7-39).

THE IRRUPTION OF THE KINGDOM

The change that this brought about in the understanding of large sections of Catholic Christianity in Chile is important for a closer understanding of the role that religion played during the rule of Pinochet. The purpose of a Christian life, in orthodox theology, is salvation, presented as a state partially gained by an ethical existence during one's life, the reward of which is 'everlasting life' usually described in spatial terms as a place called heaven or the kingdom of God. (Hell is not very fashionable in more orthodox Catholic, theological circles and is more likely to be presented as a state of 'not-heaven'). However, the discourse of Liberation Theology discloses a more immediate understanding of salvation which is now historically situated. For Boff:

> The kingdom of God is a total, global and structural transfiguration and revolution of the reality of human being. . . The kingdom of God is not to be in another world but is the old world transformed into a new one (1986: 53).

This understanding became one of the key images in the small communities of Chile. It brought about the possibility of a discourse of time which was not alienating - putting off salvation for another time and another place - but legitimating an understanding of the future as being present as seed to be nurtured and developed. The place was not to be entered only through death

but rather to be constructed and encountered here and now as the place transformed by liberating action and solidarity.

The implications for ideological control are important in this reconstruction of salvific space. In the old model, heaven is the goal, and earth is the place to be free from rather than free in. The passage from this place to the next, however, is policed by the priests and Church specialists who mediate this reality. The sacraments infused with the 'spirit' of the other place are handed by the priest to the people as 'food for the journey'. The people in turn prepare themselves for the crossing over by confessing their faults to the same priest who in the name of the God of the other place, pardons.

In the new understanding of salvation as liberation the kingdom has 'irrupted' into the present and becomes a task to be completed. There is no journey through space to be conducted in this image. On the contrary the place is here, the time is now but it is a process to be engaged in, an objective to be achieved. The removal of Pinochet and what he stood for merges with this task and it is clearly seen that the kingdom does not come to full fruition without challenging the symbols and practices which contradict it (Worsley, 1957:226).

And so the movement of the procession behind *El Bigote*, with his blue and white cross, was an inscription of this text upon the streets of the *población*. It was a marking out of the territory to be liberated and an invitation to the people to be brave, to overcome their fear of the regime, to step out into the streets and engage in the struggle for their definitive transformation as liberated space. Politics becomes the road to salvation and religion, in its turn, becomes politics by other means.

CHAPTER SIX

COMMUNITY

EASTER VIGIL

It was Jorge who discovered the secret of a well ironed, white, cotton bed-sheet when hung from the ceiling, pulled down by the two lower corners and fixed firmly to the floor. Partially disguised behind the odd potted plant and lots of flowers it can be made to look like part of a back-drop without giving away its surprising potential. This sheet was used every Easter during the midnight 'vigil' liturgy held in the cramped accommodation of the ramshackle hut adjoining my house.

The traditional service began, as usual, with everyone gathered around a bonfire out on the street from which flames the symbolic Easter Candle would be lit, representing the risen Christ - light for the world. According to the rubrics the fire is blessed before its flame is passed on although, for some reason which now eludes my memory, Antonio had taken on the task of replacing the priest's blessing with one that required him to light a bundle of sticks from the bonfire, hold them high above his head and call upon the winds from the north, while facing north, from the winds of the south as he turned in that direction, then east, then west. I was told that this was some kind of traditional Mapuche ritual although I rather suspected that it was Antonio being dramatic. In either case it seemed more interesting than the utterings reserved for the priest and it got everyone into the mood for what would normally turn out to be a service lasting at least two hours.

In the complete darkness of the night, the flame from the Easter candle was passed on to the individual candles held by each participant as they filed into the meeting place until eventually the room became a flaming spectacle. There was something moving about this annual ritual of passing on the flame from candle to candles; a dramatic, momentary binding together of a group of people by the universal mystery implied by the elements of wind and fire (and the water which was to become the symbolic focus as the evening moved on). Unfortunately the moment of drama, if the Catholic ritual was allowed to run its course, would normally be brought to an abrupt end by the next part of the proceedings which was supposed to be a series of readings from the Bible, starting with the account of creation from the book of Genesis, through

the 'sinful fall' of Adam and Eve, through the calling of Abraham, the story of Exodus right up until the Christian addition to this narrative with the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Intended to be dramatic, interspersed with song and psalm, this verbal recalling of the myth of salvation and redemption unfortunately invariably leads many of the participants into the kind of stupor which can only be achieved by listening to long readings, boringly delivered. Only someone trained in the dramatic arts, could reasonably be expected to achieve the intended impact.

This is where Jorge's bed-sheet came to the rescue. Now, with candles extinguished, the Community, seated best they could in the cramped circumstances, settled back for the 'journey' into mythical times. On the first occasion that Jorge's trick was employed the look of confused shock on the assembled faces was a picture to behold. The candles extinguished (filling the room immediately with eye stinging smoke) the lights were not switched on as they would normally be. Sitting there in the darkness the momentary confusion increased as a voice boomed from the precariously rigged up speaker system:
"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."

A rumbling could be heard in the background. There was a nervous shifting as people recognized the only too familiar sound of a *temblor*, an earth tremor. Only no tremor was felt. The deific voice continued:

"Now the earth was a formless void, there was darkness over the deep, and God's spirit hovered over the water. God said:",
An even deeper, mysterious voice boomed out:
"Let there be light".

At which point, simultaneously with the opening bars of Strauss's 'Also Sprach Zarathustra', Jorge's sheet came to life as a picture of the sun rising over the neighbouring fields miraculously appeared upon it in brilliant colour. I say miraculous because no source for its projection could be seen anywhere. In fact it was being projected from the back and, with the sheet tautly stretched, the image shone through with hardly any loss of sharpness. This simple device completely renewed the earlier, more common, clumsier device of having a slide projector in the middle of the room. This would give the game away long before the slide show could begin, eliminating any chance of

surprise. Not to mention the fact that the operation of these machines inevitably became a distraction in the course of their operation. Hiding the projector at the back allowed both for the element of surprise and a distraction free operation.

And so with pauses for communal song and solo recitals Jorge's picture show accompanied by assorted classical and Chilean music, told the story of creation, fall and liberation with images of the familiar: the *población*, the people, menacing shots of the military, some of which depicted them in violent action, pictures of processions with accusatory banners, the image of Clotario Blest, the octogenarian, ex-head of the disbanded Trades Union Council and a recording of an interview with him as he said: "Those who live by the gun, die by the gun". A blend of word, music and image, edited and put together by Jorge and Juan Carlos, that left all of us sapped of energy, not lethargic but exhausted by the stirring of emotions.

The rest of the service that night followed its course with the blessing of water, its liberal sprinkling and the Eucharist. Finally, as the communion service drew to a close, La Sra Blanca, La Mirta, Silvia, Margarita and a few other women began, what appeared at first to be, an act of vandalism as they produced huge pairs of scissors and began chopping the heads of the hundreds of flowers that are always brought to this event. As each flower was cut it was thrown into the crowd and there was much hilarity as each person tried to ensure the possession of at least one.

Once more the candles were lit as Juan Carlos explained that as a sign of the commitment we long ago took as the *Comunidad Cristiana de Lo Errazuriz* each person should now go home through the streets of the *población* carrying a flower as symbol of hope in these times of fear and the candles as symbols of the light which must be kept burning in the days of darkness. With the final song the assembly dispersed into the warm, still, late summer, early morning darkness. I walked for a few blocks and watched the lighted candles spreading through the *población*. I did not see a single one extinguished before disappearing into the distance.

A DAY IN THE LIFE

These liturgical activities were important events in the life of the CEB (The *Comunidad Eclesial de Base*) not only in Lo Errazuriz but in all the

poblaciones at that time. They became events that prevented the universal rituals of the Catholic Church from being merely vehicles for the promotion of orthodoxy, which Sobrino refers to as "an attempt to solve problems by appeal to authority" (1988:9), and became instead reminders of this hierarchical nature of the official Church and turning them into exercises in collective creativity and moments of intellectual stimulation and interchange as well as moments charged with social emotion that was politically honed and directed at sure and concrete targets. They were important moments of solidarity in difficult times. As Sobrino goes on to say:

> It is not enough for the church to possess a doctrine of human rights, or even that it preach that doctrine. Indeed that preaching could actually be transformed into a sterile orthodoxy, a palliative to the conscience in the absence of an actual church praxis of human rights. (Sobrino, 1988: 114)

However, these religious events did not in any measure exhaust the action of the members of the *Comunidad*. On the contrary most of the activity would be done in much more practical and in less formally symbolic ways. Indeed much of the important activity would consist of a lot of hard work in situations of a more practical nature. A typical day would look something like the following:

At 7.00 am the day's activities were already beginning for the *Comunidad Eclesial de Base* of Lo Errazuriz. This was the time when, five days a week, Las Sras Yolanda, La Mirta, La Blanca and La Margarita would begin the task of preparing breakfast for about eighty to a hundred children who would be coming in on their way to School. Schools in Chile mostly work on a double shift system. One half attend the morning session while the others were allotted to the afternoon. Which is why in the late morning another team would prepare a lunch for a similar number of children.

Malnutrition amongst the children was a constantly recurring problem in the poblaciones which, together with the poor living conditions, meant that child health was a serious social issue that could not be answered with mere rhetoric. The breakfast and lunch would basically consist of dry milk provided by government and voluntary aid agencies. Much of this material aid would be passed through the organisation of the Catholic Church probably on the understanding that this was a body that had the kind of network that reached

into every corner of Chile. The milk would be served heated and sometimes supplemented by rice which would be mixed in with the hot milk.

By 7.30 am children would be arriving, many accompanied by their mothers who would join in with the task of preparing and serving the food, not just to their own children but to all. After the little ones had eaten and begun to make their way to their schools it would be the turn of the adults to sit around for a short while and finish eating the left-overs with a cup of tea. This was both an opportunity for gossip and, at the same time an opportunity for the women to begin to talk about their problems of survival in terms of their economic and social problems. From these discussions many of the women would eventually begin to take part in other activities.

By 9.30 am another flurry of activity was beginning as more mothers would arrive with children under five in tow. This was the time for the playgroup (*El Jardin*). The objective, as for other community groups, was for the group to function on a number of levels. On the one hand it was an opportunity for some of the younger mothers, especially those without immediate or adequate family support, to have a place to leave their children in safe hands while they worked or sought work in paid employment elsewhere. On another level, it was also an opportunity for the mothers to take a turn in the participation in the running and supervision of the playgroup, which lasted all day and ran for five days a week. In this way as they co-operated with each other, with more experienced mothers who worked as volunteers, and especially with a trained paid worker financed by funds from a development agency, the younger mothers had the opportunity to increase their own parenting skills. It was also the inevitable opportunity to discuss the wider social and political issues which affected daily life. Once again, through one activity, there was a possibility for a gradual movement of the imagination which enabled the women to interpret the playgroup not just in terms of its practical effects but also in terms of its political implications.

Inevitably by this time in the morning there would be a lot of activity beginning to occur in my house which for a number of years acted as the daily, non-liturgical, meeting space for the CEB. There would usually be twenty or so young people gathered, engaged in planning various actions and activities, especially related to the *escuela popular* (the people's school) which I will discuss in the next chapter. The activity in the building at the back was also

beginning to change its clientele by this stage as the *comprando juntos* organisers began their daily stock-taking before setting off to replace the basic food stuffs which formed the core of this food buying co-operative. Not only would they buy the flour, sugar, rice, beans etc; merely in terms of the CEB of Lo Errazuriz but also in relation to other co-operatives in the area, permitting a more extensive and economically viable form of bulk buying. This activity alone required a vast amount of organisational activity and needed to be serviced daily by the community volunteers involved in this particular initiative.

By mid-day the *equipo de salud* (the health team) would already be holding its daily meeting. Most CEBs would have such a group linked as part of a network with the polyclinic run by the diocese. This polyclinic provided trained medical staff, doctors and nurses who offered their services to the poorer sectors. The task of the local team was to provide immediate first aid to the entire *población* for which they were trained by the organising centre. They would also provide a first level diagnosis before referring the worst cases to the polyclinic itself. A major task of this group was closely related to the problem of malnutrition and child health and, therefore, there was a lot of emphasis on health education with special concern for the new born and younger children and their mothers.

The afternoon activities would begin to take on a slightly different character as the group of older women would meet for a knitting, tea and gossip session. This was one of the *talleres* (workshops) which was about developing skills either for the production of domestic goods or even goods that could be sold. For some reason known only within the logic of the Party, this particular group was targeted by the local Communists for 'infiltration'. For this they sent la Sra Amelia, a dedicated party member. Whilst knitting it was her job to turn the conversations around to the conditions of life of the women and then steer the conversations into a political analysis of their causes. As it was also the policy of the CEB to use all activities for the wider purpose of political education nobody took particular exception to the Communist ploy. Although they specifically targeted this group they were not absent from many of the other CEB activities. Unfortunately for them, as time moved on, the political discourse and organisation of the CEB began to take on a more independent political tone that owed little to this intervention of the Party. As a result their activities, though never refused, became increasingly irrelevant. In

fact for a number of years there was quite open co-operation between the local Communist Party and the CEB in all matters of organisation that affected the wider *población* activities. This even went as far as inviting them to participate in many planning meetings. However, it became increasingly difficult to sustain this level of co-operation as the political situation and concomitant levels of organisation became more sophisticated. The local Communist groups were arguably more tied to central control than the CEBs were to the official Church. As a result flexibility in local level decision making became increasingly more difficult.

By early evening an apparently more 'church-like' atmosphere began to operate in and around the centre of the CEB. From this time until much later into the night there would be a procession of little groups of adults participating in preparation for the sacraments. This was an obligation laid upon the adults (by the hierarchical Church) to participate in various education projects in order to prepare themselves for marriage (six months preparation) or to have the right to send their children to make their first communion (two year preparation for parents and a similar programme for the children). In point of fact, the programmes of the official Church were firmly 'kidnapped' and the emphasis was laid upon an analysis of the actual conditions that the people lived in their daily lives and, using the Bible as a means for investigating the kinds of metaphorical shifts I have already described, beginning a long process of what some like to call *concientización* (consciousness raising). Within a two year programme it was expected that people might drift into more practical activities of solidarity within the CEB. In practice the majority would not. Even so it was probably difficult to pass through such a long period without at least some change in the political and social perspective of the participants.

As the evening moved on there would be a lot of activity. People coming and going, meetings being held and a general air of purpose. However, I am not suggesting that all this movement implied an inevitable movement forward towards some form of realisation of an ideal community. Much activity in the end led nowhere in particular. There was the tendency to bureaucratize the processes because this was the way things were traditionally done. Indeed for something to be too straightforward seemed almost too transparent to be true. Bureaucracy was a way of life and it was no different in the Community. There were also the inevitable eruptions of jealousy, of disagreements with

personal and inter-group feuding; money going missing; accusations being made; the worst often assumed of the other; resignations from leadership made with dramatic flourishes.

And yet in the midst of these confusions human communication was taking place albeit often in an untidy and unromantic manner. There was, in a nutshell, a democratic space, sometimes used wisely, sometimes foolishly; a space for creativity, for assuming responsibility, for solidarity, for criticism, for the experience of democracy in a situation where the democratic space had been violently shut down and where social isolation was required as a means of maintaining control. The CEB was more than a protest it was an antidote; not a solution but a space where a spirit of opposition to human degradation could be nurtured. Inevitably as the new kinds of grass roots political movements were eventually 'kidnapped' in their turn by the established parties, so the prospective new models of democratic and dynamic Church structures were to be 're-captured' by the official Church. Nevertheless, for much of the time of Pinochet's rule, many people began to experience and participate in ideas and practices that might one day still give fruit in a more democratic an participative society. It was a kind of rehearsal reminiscent of Geertz's commentary on the Balinese cockfight. Here in the life of the Community, as in the cockfight,: 'it is of these emotions. . .that society is built and individuals are put together (Geertz, 1973b:449).

COMMUNITY

The use of the term 'community', as Cohen points out, is something that appears to be unproblematic in everyday speech but which immediately presents problems when 'imported into the discourse of social science' (Cohen, 1985:11-12). Part of the problem, of course, is that in everyday speech the use of the same word often leads to an assumption that its meaning is equally shared and therefore can be taken for granted. But words are symbols and cannot be made to simply correspond to 'facts' as the Logical Positivists once hoped, verifiable to sense experience and thus rendered true or false, meaningful or meaningless (Ayer, 1940: 93-7).

However, it is important to emphasise that the sense-making mediation of the mind does not imply an understanding of reality as if it has an intrinsic core meaning that can simply be 'read', albeit with varying interpretations. As we have seen above in the discussion on metaphor, sense making, meaning, is

not the interpretation of isolated phenomena but rather a matter of making connections between them (Wittgenstein, 1961: 2.01). The reality to which the word 'community' refers is not one 'chunk' but a variety of different 'pieces' amongst which we might include the *población* as a poor *barrio*, the experience of poverty, the military government, friendships and enmities, hopes and desires, political oppression, fear, the availability of food aid and of medical aid, the presence of various political movements, the neighbouring *poblaciones* and CEB's, the emotions (Ricoeur, 1978:246) and prejudices of this or that person around some or all of these as well as the metaphorical application of one set of phenomena to explain others (Black, 1962: 219-243; Ricoeur, 1978:216-256)).

The list is endless and the term 'community' takes on its meaning to the extent that these various components are seen as interconnected and part of the overall picture and thus constituted as reality. Some parts might be seen as being of prime importance by some but as totally irrelevant by others who nevertheless identify themselves as members of the Community and describe themselves as such. These differences will sometimes be articulated and debated, discussed or fought over; at other times they will remain vaguely expressed or, perhaps more commonly, not expressed at all.

The important thing to grasp is that we are not witnessing agreements or disagreements over a pre-existent reality of community but rather its on-going construction in a permanent state of creativity. It is in fact culture in action, the continual knitting of the notorious web of significance which, even then, is related to other webs (Geertz, 1973a: 5). David Parkin suggests a similar figure with his notion of endless perspectives where culture is understood 'as a constantly re-worked product' (Parkin, 1987:66-67). Myth, metaphor and metaphysics are thus not erroneous conceptions but imaginative ways of making connections, and are not merely an attempt to *represent* reality but, in the words of Susanne Langer, are the use of 'the selective, interpretative power of the intelligent eye' (1951:213) which looks at the world and sees more than objects to be modelled. The artist:

> Sees more than the utilitarian import of their shapes; he literally *sees* the reflection of human feeling, the "dynamic" laws of life, power and rhythm, in forms on which his attention is focused; he sees things he cannot name, magical imports, rightness of line and mass, his hands

> unwittingly express and even overdraw what he sees, and the product amazes and delights him and looks "beautiful" (Langer, 1951: 213).

So to ask what is meant by a word is to ask about the field of relationships which are imputed to it and which even then overflow it. Furthermore, it is not only a question of interrogating the parts but the 'spaces' in between because it is precisely here that we enter into the 'moods and motivations' (Geertz, 1973b: 90) that create the imponderable variables that make definitions arbitrary if not worthless.

And so it is with 'Community' as CEB, the Basic Ecclesial Community. Its understanding is not to be found in assumptions about the meaning of the word used but rather by the way the people of Lo Errazuriz put it to work for their various individual and collective ends. It is in this sense, just as the meaning of the terms used ebb and flow in the discourse of actual practice of daily life, that we should be wary of fixing the CEB of Lo Errazuriz into one particular form simply for analytical purposes. We are unlikely to usefully understand what is going on if we merely limit our attention to seeking out the structural principles that give form to some neatly defined space we name 'community'. As Hastrup and Fog Olwig say, commenting upon the argument of Gupta and Ferguson (1992) that the world should be viewed as a globally continuous space characterised by hierarchical relations of power constellations extending from certain metropoles:

> clearly defined places do not exist in and of themselves. Rather they are constructed culturally as a community of relations constitutes and demarcates itself within hierarchically organized space, of unequal relationships. The cultural construction of distinct places in a world of interconnectedness is therefore for them an important subject of anthropological study (Hastrup and Fog Olwig, 1995: 9-10).

They point out that Appadurai (1991) goes even further by suggesting that 'the world consists of deterritorialized ethnoscapes where culturally constructed places will not necessarily coincide with actual physical locations' (ibid;p.10). Indeed, the CEB of Lo Errazuriz would appear to be resistant to an analysis which assumes that 'cultures', and by consequence, people, are rooted in a particular landscape (Hastrup and Fog Olwig, 1995:10). It is necessary, therefore, to accept the fact that the Community was always a changing phenomenon with highly permeable boundaries allowing for a constant flow of ideas, information, influences and events from a much wider

world. This exchange with the 'outside' had differing effects upon the actors who associated with the CEB as well as others in the *población*, such that individual and collective practice could be experienced as being in constant flux. This should prompt us, perhaps, to allow for the fact that 'people's actions alter the conditions of their existence, often in ways that they never intend or foresee' (Hastrup and Fog Olwig, 1995:10 quoting Rosaldo, 1989:102-3; see also Bourdieu, 1977:94).

I believe that I am correct in stating that I never once heard the word 'community' used in any other context than the ecclesial. It might be that this is merely a delusion resulting from my own selective listening but I do not recall the term being used by the inhabitants of Lo Errazuriz to refer to the *población* as a whole. That the *población* was not experienced as a community could of course be explained by its comparatively short history, its inhabitants coming originally from different areas and circumstances; some from Santiago and neighbouring towns, others, especially the more recent arrivals, from the rural south of Chile. Apart from events like the original land invasion organised by political parties, the people had few social relationships to build upon, and so the process of constructing the kind of shared history that would be the basis for a shared identity was very much a work in progress.

Of course, social networks could be seen to be operating; formal and informal organisations, clubs, movements, all contributing to the life in the *población*, but there appeared to be no urgent concern to express this in terms of a shared identity. That the activities and lives of the people were rooted in that particular landscape is indisputable as a physical fact but its symbolic significance should not be over-emphasized. The *pobladores* would more often describe their identity in terms of being from Santiago or from Talca (south of Chile) with a tone of assertive pride lacking from their mentions of Lo Errazuriz. Being 'Chilean' was of far more significance.

And yet the fact that people were encapsulated within a certain physically defined landscape inevitably had some impact upon the kinds of social relations that developed. The clubs and organisations that came into being were formed *within* the boundaries of that place and in this sense the beginning of a community identity could be witnessed, especially if we follow the proposal of Cohen who states that 'rather than thinking of community as

an *integrative* mechanism, it should be regarded as instead as an *aggregating* device' (Cohen, 1985:20). The people of Lo Errazuriz though living within highly permeable boundaries and spending little emotional energy in defining these, nevertheless, found themselves turned in towards each other by them; and within that space relationships began to be defined and promoted.

It is perhaps within this context of apparently weak, local boundary consciousness (or concern) that explains why so much energy was expended upon the various local grouping. If identity was experienced only weakly at the level of *población* then we might say that, at the level of groupings, they appeared to be experienced with tenacity.

Here there are two possible pitfalls in an analysis of identity in the *población*. The one would be to assume that the lack of emphasis on boundaries, whether constituted structurally or symbolically, implies that they are unimportant or non-existent. In this case the search for understanding might very well be turned from the local to the national with the consequence of devaluing the agency of the *pobladores* in their resistance to the military regime. It is this kind of approach, as Susan Eckstein comments, which explains why in our current knowledge of Latin America 'we know much more about state structures, political parties, and interest groups than about the lives and preoccupations of popular groups' (Eckstein, 1989:2). The second pitfall would be to assume the opposite: that the evident lack of boundary consciousness is only because, being symbolically constructed, it is initially hidden from the outsider. In this case the danger is that the outsider might too quickly impute an importance for boundary, constructing it on behalf of the people in a way that is not merited.

It would perhaps be helpful in an analysis of any *población* (or its equivalent in other countries) to recognize that although they might look like homogeneous units akin to villages (Lloyd, 1979:163-185) many of the inhabitants remember a previous existence in other places. Their presence in the *población* is the result of a migration, local or from a distance, often as a result of dire economic circumstances. They have not chosen that locality in order to fulfil a sense of belonging but in order to alleviate personal and family needs. In these circumstances it is necessary to allow for the fact that a sense of belonging in terms of the *población* is more likely to be an emergent quality. It is possible that under these circumstances 'belonging' is going to be

developed at an even more local level - that of the group and it is terms of the development of these and their relationships to each other and to individuals that a local discourse might eventually develop permitting people of the *población* to "think themselves into difference" (Cohen, 1986:17).

It is in this sense that we can begin to explain what otherwise would appear to be the contradiction of the barricades; because if the boundaries of the *población* are, even symbolically, of little concern to the majority of the people then we might question why so much effort and risk was invested at that point? It has been suggested to me that the answer lies in the fact that the barricades can be explained without recourse to the concept of boundary in the first place. However, I would suggest that what we are witnessing at the barricades is in fact the emergence, amongst some *pobladores* at least, of boundary consciousness which has important implications for the identity of the *población* not only in terms of a recognition of its existence as an entity but as a statement about the hoped for quality of its existence.

The issues of identity in terms of the *población* are not merely those of being but rather of becoming; and that becoming cannot be separated from the development of the individuals who arrived with their families in the not too distant past. Their own concerns had initially been those of survival in a hostile environment. They had been, in many cases, a mass of strangers to each other with different motives, needs, fears and concerns. The initial level of boundary was that which separated one *sitio*, one family and even one self from another. For, after all, what are boundaries but:

> Zones of reflection: on who one is; on who others are. There is no axiomatic rule which stipulates that the boundaries of selfhood are less significant in this regard than those of a collectivity. The subordination of self to society is achieved by power (Cohen, 1993:17).

And so the question of community, *in terms of* the *población*, is not a question of inventing selves in the image of the generalisation 'culture' (Cohen, 1993:18); nor is it, following Cohen's argument, a question of reducing:

> Social aggregates to their individual components. It is to insist, first, that individuals are more than their memberships of and participation in collectivities, and second, that collectivities are themselves the products of their individual members...(Cohen, 1994:133).

Considering the *Comunidad Eclesial de Base* of Lo Errazuriz we must place it in the context of a phenomenon that receives much of its form and content from a generalized ideological position from within that part of the Catholic Church which promotes a theology of liberation but, at its most important level, it was being constructed by its members in the light of their historical background. The CEB, like other organisations in the *población* was an expression of individuals coming together, engaging in making culture within which they will develop without losing their sense of self. In turn these organisations will make their various contributions to a larger unit of local identity which might imply an increasing use of local boundaries in an attempt to invest them symbolically with a collective identity.

It is precisely to the question of the CEB that we now turn in order to understand at least part of the role it played in the events of the developing protest to the military government that we have been following.

CEB - AN ECCLESIOLOGICAL VIEW

The Basic Ecclesial Communities of Latin America are intimately linked with Liberation Theology. It would be tempting to say that they are inseparable but this would be to underestimate the fact that not every part of the phenomenon that describes itself in these terms is as interested in the socio/political implications as in the possibilities of revitalising otherwise moribund official ecclesial structures. The first represents an adventure of the imagination, the second merely a deceit in the sense that, while using the rhetoric of social liberation the real aims were still about the survival of Church institutions and continued clerical control.

Nevertheless, the notion of the CEB, although sometimes presented as a return to some putative early Christian model (Bruneau, 1979:236), is a product of Liberation Theology. In fact we might go so far as to say that it is the first line of practice of that theology. It is intended to be in the first instance a new model of Church (specifically Catholic Church). Boff suggests that the CEB is a break with what he identifies as three models from the past:

In the first place there still exists a model he describes as 'The Church as City of God' (1986:2-3). In this model the Church sees itself as the exclusive vehicle of salvation for the whole of humanity. The key elements are the sacraments, the liturgy, parish activities. The Pope, bishops, clergy are the

key players without whom nothing decisive can happen. Tradition, official and orthodox formulas, and juridical-canonical aspects are privileged. The world has no theological value and must therefore be converted. 'The political realm is "tarnished" and is to be avoided at all costs. More than neutral, the Church is indifferent to "worldly" realities' (ibid :3). This is not to say that the Church is not expressed in an organised way in the world, on the contrary:

> Because it is only through the Church that salvation and the supernatural are made explicit, the Church undertakes such projects that have the explicit title of "Catholic" such as Catholic Schools, the Catholic press, Catholic colleges and universities, Catholic credit unions, and so forth. This is how the presence of God in the world is guaranteed. The Church thus maintains itself apart from the world while duplicating many of the world's services (1986:3).

While this model has, in large measure been by-passed in theoretical terms by the reforms of Vatican II, in practice this model of Church as *civitas Dei* is still widely practiced.

The second model which Boff identifies is that of the Church as *Mater et Magistra*, mother and teacher (1986:4). Here the Church is more firmly inserted into the world and indeed lives in symbiosis with it. This was the model of the colonial endeavour when missionary and colonial powers went hand in hand. The civil and the religious are domains that co-exist. The one brings civilization, the other salvation to the savage who lacks and needs both. With the end of colonial rule the Church adjusts its role to that of a pact with the ruling elites that control the state. The ruling class governs the masses, the Church looks after their spiritual welfare. The Church, concerned with the poor acts as intermediary never questioning the legitimacy of power only its 'abuses'.

In this model dogma is rigid, there is the ever present appeal to authority, especially to that of the Pope; only the priest preaches and this is devoid of prophetic witness. In Latin America where this model is more commonly found, the intimate relationship between the ruling elites and Church hierarchy implies that problems of abuse of human rights are dealt with not in an open forum but rather in secret contacts between the two authorities.

> This model appeals to dominant political powers in that it reduces the Church's field of activity to the sacristy. It presupposes a functionalist sociology wherein each body is defined by its practices and does not

> interfere with other segments of society. Therefore, the Church is not to interfere in the political arena (1986:5).

The third, and most common model of Church is that of the Church as Sacrament of Salvation. Here the Church has engaged in the world on different terms. With the rise of dynamic, nationalistic, and industrial middle classes, especially in Latin America, a rapid modernization of the structure of material production occurred (ibid; p.5). With this there arose new forms of social involvement in which the Church participated. Justice, social participation and integral development for everyone (ibid; p.5) moved to centre stage. In this view the Church:

> Came to value science and the relative worth of earthly realities developing an ethics of progress and thereby committing itself to social transformation, participating in all of the great debates concerning education, economic development, unions, and agrarian reform. Thus the secular came to be of theological value (ibid; p.6).

The Church modernized its structures in the light of this theological development, especially as expressed in the Council of Vatican II. There now emerged a clearer voice in denouncing the abuses of the capitalist system and especially the marginalization of the poor. But its perspective was reformist rather than alternative, "it did not demand another type of society but rather sought participation for all in the modern liberal system of advanced technological capitalism" (ibid; p.6). The problem for Boff here is that the Church is condemned to evangelize this society with the values of modernity itself. Therefore, the relationship with the poor, the central concern for liberation theologians, will be defined from the perspective of the rich: "the rich will be called upon to aid in the cause of the poor but without necessarily requiring change in social class practice" (1986:7).

Finally, Boff identifies a new model emerging from a recognition that underdevelopment is the state in which many countries are kept as a necessary consequence of the need for growth in the developed countries. The long term Christian strategy is the liberation from these conditions, which meets the needs of the oppressed rather than those of the rich nations. The oppressed are the historical subjects of this liberation 'who must develop a consciousness of their oppressed situation, organize themselves, and take steps that will lead to a society that is less dependent and less subject to

injustices' (1986:7-8). Other 'classes' can and should join in this process but should not attempt to control it.

In the early seventies young people and intellectuals, together with many movements in Latin America, attempted to put this perspective into practice. Boff admits that initially these individuals and groups were from the 'middle classes', idealistic but lacking a grounded political sense about the feasibility of a liberation movement where the ordinary people would be 'empowered' to address the social, economic and political issues that produced their situation of poverty. However, with the gradual emergence of *ceb's* amongst the poorer sectors, especially in countries like Brazil, and later Chile, a new kind of Church structure emerged where critical thought was encouraged, where everything was discussed and if (despite the romantic 'it all emerged from the people themselves' school of liberation writers) there was still a major input from professional pastoral agents, even this was more of a facilitating contribution that did not fit to easily with the traditional power relations between people and clergy.

CEB - A THEOLOGY 'FROM BELOW'

This aspect of having a say in the processes of Church construction is crucial to the understanding of this phenomenon. As Boff points out:

> For a people who have been oppressed for centuries, whose "say" has always been denied, the simple fact of *having a say* is the first stage in taking control and shaping their own destiny. The Comunidad Eclesial de Base thus transcends its religious meaning and takes on a highly political one (1986:9).

In other words, the challenge of the liberation model to the traditions and practices of the Church as a monolithic institution which denies a voice to the people, becomes a paradigm for challenging other structures and ideologies which deny a 'say', dominate or claim to speak for the people.

The emergence of a theology of liberation and subsequent development of the CEBs in Latin America introduced a series of new phrases which quickly entered into the discourse of the Catholic Church. The phrase "liberation theology" itself already speaks volumes about the kind of religiosity implied, others like "Church of the poor", the "popular Church", "grassroots or base communities", "the preferential option for the poor", even when used by more

reactionary and conservative elements for different ends, indicate an important shift in religious imagery and practice (Gismondi, 1988:343). It is usual, within liberation theological discourse, to claim that, whereas traditional theology proceeds from the professionally trained theologians of the academy, liberation theology emerges from below. As Ernesto Cardenal puts it:

> The theology of liberation is not one more chapter of traditional theology invented recently in Latin America, as European theologians are accustomed to believe. . .It is not. It is one that replaces in the light of the revolution all topics of traditional theology. . .This is a theology of the oppressed class, while the other is a theology of the dominant class. It is not practiced by professional theologians. . . instead it is usually the fruit of community reflection and is designed by men and women who belong to revolutionary communities. And it is for the use of these same communities (Cardenal, 1975).

This optimistic statement, typical of liberationist discourse, contains part truths and wishful thinking. It is of course untenable to say Liberation Theology is not practiced by professional theologians. Gutierrez, Boff, Segundo, Sobrino, Galilea, head the list of well known, classically trained, professional theologians who have articulated, at no little cost to their careers and even personal safety, much of the theory which underpins the new religious approaches in Latin America. It is their theology which has provided a new vocabulary, new images and alternative theories of religious knowledge and to obscure this point for the purposes of revolutionary rhetoric or a new, although inverted, theological triumphalism (theology from below) will only hinder a fuller appreciation of the changes they have brought about in the political and social life in Latin America.

It would be more accurate to say that the production of religious knowledge, as a particular language and imagery that enables meaningful connections to be made, which we can discern in liberation theology, involves the ordinary and hitherto untrained believer in the process of theologizing. What has happened is that 'the production of religious knowledge has become decentred from the professional (and from the authoritarianism and doctrinalism of the professional institution of the Church)' (Gismondi, 1988:349), and has at least included the men and women who had been taken previously as the objects of religious theory and certainly not its producers.

The role of Liberation Theology in the development of resistance to the authoritarian regimes during the past twenty five years or so in Latin America should not be underestimated. This anthropological study, of course, is more concerned with the understanding and practice of this theology in the processes of the *población* rather than the exposition of the theology *per se*, although a point not missed by the professional theologians themselves who understand this theology not as a new theme of reflection but rather a new way to do theology. It is, they would say, a theology that is a critical reflection on what is happening in the actual practice of Christians (Gutiérrez, 1974:14-15). The methodology of Liberation Theology has functioned by providing the ordinary people of the poor *barrios* with symbolic tools which have enabled them to work creatively when faced with the oppressive circumstances of their every day existence.

However, in the case of Chile, while recognizing this increase in the symbolic *repertoire*, it should also be noted that there was already a wide spread political culture emanating from the time of the *Unidad Popular* of Allende, before Liberation Theology and Basic Ecclesial Communities began to take a wide hold in the *poblaciones*. In this sense the starting point of the methodologies of Liberation Theology were perhaps further down the line than in some other countries of Latin America.

In fact the process of conscientization implicit in Liberation Theology was as much about re-introducing many of the people to political discussion as it was about initiating them. In practice this meant that there were always going to be many different levels of discussion and practice going on simultaneously in and around the Basic Community. In the next chapter I shall discuss the 'popular education' approach taken in the *población*. This was intimately linked with Liberation Theology in the conscientization process at work in that *barrio*, nevertheless, the contribution of this theology was distinct.

In the first place the work of Liberation Theology was dialogical in comparison with the more usual monologue of other theologies. In other words the engagement of the people with Liberation Theology was one which promoted the exploration of ideas rather than there mere reception, the promotion of creative and critical attitudes rather than acquiescence. This approach was, in itself, already an object lesson in taking a critical stance. That ordinary

Catholics should not only have an opinion but be encouraged to voice it, that they should dare to criticise what for centuries had been presented as immutable, that they should take what had previously been taught and turn it on its head (in radical re-interpretation) was itself a liberation that demonstrated that nothing need be accepted simply on the terms of those who claim authority. Indeed, the theology itself produced a criterion for judging the worth of any authoritative voice in terms of whether it spoke from "a preferential option for the poor", in other words: Who benefited from these utterances?

Insofar as many of the leaders of the community were old political hands from the time of the UP (at least in the local context), political discourse was nothing new. For this group of people, numbering about thirty, their engagement with Liberation Theology was about questioning the more rigid ideological elements of their thinking. It was about taking hold of a new kind of discourse which was powerful in its political imagery and yet, simultaneously, a language with which they could engage with the dominant catholic culture of their compatriots. I have already argued that in its initial phases the capacity for ambiguity (at least at the symbolic level) allowed wide scope for promoting the habits of organisation, dialogue, criticism and democracy.

In practice this group, which was made up of formal and informal leadership in the community, would meet once a week with myself (although, like all meetings, never exclusive). The purpose of this meeting was usually to look at the Bible readings of the liturgy of the following Sunday. However, It needs to be recognized that reading the Bible did not always come easily for Catholics. The Bible, although presented methodically throughout the year in the Sunday liturgy, was not their 'natural' domain and was, indeed, seen more as the territory of the Evangelicals who would be seen preaching at the street corners and in their frequent processions through the streets clutching the 'book', waving it aloft, as the local Evangelical Pastor put it to me: 'like a sword of righteousness'.

The Catholic Church, on the other hand, had its sacraments and its dogma, (carefully controlled by the hierarchy). The Bible, insofar as it did have resonance was, within the liturgy, controlled by the priest and it was only he (or an ordained deacon) who could read from the four Gospels (lay readers

were eventually permitted to read from the other books), only he who could preach on the text. The practice of taking the Bible as a text to be analyzed and used in turn as a tool for analysis was very much a contribution of Liberation Theology in Catholic practice (although the re-emergence of the Bible in Catholic circles really began with the Ecumenical Council , Vatican II, in the early sixties Which proclaimed that "Easy access should be provided for all the Christian Faithful" which Abbott described as "the most novel section of the Constitution" [seeAbbott, 1966:125]).

In the weekly meetings of the leaders the biblical text would be read aloud by one or more of the group's participants. After which the discussion would begin to turn to an analysis of the narrative in terms of its actors. Who had said what to whom? What was happening while this action or that was occurring? Who were the major figures, who the minor? In this process the 'historical text' began to take on a more contemporary tone its culturally specific context began to be expressed in newer, more contemporary language and imagery.

A hermeneutical leap would take place as people 'discovered' (imputed) similarities between the narrative text and the 'text' of their own experience. Thus, for example, in the story of the Good Samaritan, the man set upon by robbers becomes more than unfortunate wretch ignored by some but treated kindly by one (an outsider), more than a moral tale about the need not to pass by those who are more unfortunate than ourselves. It becomes a fable which discloses the suffering of a man with whom the participants of the group could identify. To have little and to lose (or fear losing) even what you have, was a daily experience for the *pobladores*. The discussions would turn this way and that way, the man would be a *poblador*, he would be all the pobladores, he would the working class, he would be the 'poor', he would be an experience negotiated and re-negotiated in the dialogue of the meeting. Similarly the robbers would represent fate, vulnerability, capitalists, the military, 'the system'; those who walked by would be the Church, the politicians, the ignorant, even ordinary people who simply did not understand what they were in the presence of.

So the dialogue would continue. In the context of the present: Who was the unfortunate traveller,? Who were the robbers,? Who were those who passed by ? Slowly the biographies of those present in the meeting room were

superimposed upon the bibliographies in the biblical text . In the words of McGillicuddy:

> A communication between subjects living in two worlds takes place, a communication which respects the uniqueness of each of the worlds and at the same time seeks to bring them into an intelligible relation with one another. A certain 'fusion of horizons' occurs. . . For the BEC praxis this means that members listen to each other's opinions and interpretations with care and respect, and avoid classifying them as simply "right" or "wrong" (McGillicuddy, 1988, 239-240).

The reflection would inevitably become focused from the perspective of the experience of the people of their marginalisation, there was a mutuality in the very process which drew people closer in their recognition of sharing the same life experiences as those figures in the parable of the Bible. But harder questions would also be asked before the reflection ended. What differences would the discussion and the insights obtained, have in the life of each individual, of the community, of the *población*?

Of course, in practice, there were rarely discreet actions that flowed from a single discussion. Although there might indeed be concrete plans for a particular activity such as the final setting up of a food buying co-operative in another part of the *población*, long promised but never acted upon, or, if this was the particular political juncture, a decision to organise a public event to raise people's awareness in general, more usually, as these meeting were held week after week, there would simply be a renewal of the *compromiso* (commitment) to continue working in the development of a community and the practical promotion of solidarity. The meetings would often become , then, a reaffirmation, a deepening of the commitment to continue working rather than a logical progression or inevitable development towards a certain kind of utopia. See, Judge and Act, the methodology at play here in this process was one that should be understood in a broader terms, as a wider sweep of experience, reflection and renewed action than its simple method would imply.

The road to community construction was long, slow and arduous. The optimism implied in the Liberation Theological texts needed to be tempered with the realities on the ground. Nevertheless, through this approach it was possible to witness deep dialogue and profound insight emerging from the

encounters. This in turn did lead to a growing awareness of what was happening, what the problems were (see), to an understanding of how the situation had come about (judge) and what needed to happen to bring about transformations in the situation (act).

The theological method, of course, was not only 'one way traffic' . The process of the Hermeneutic Circle which I referred to in the previous chapter would, in the course of the community reflection, arrive at a 'suspicion' not only of the ideological superstructure in general but also of the theology itself. This in turn would lead the people into understanding that the 'official' reading of the Bible had failed to take many aspects of human experience into account. The people's then produced much more acute awareness of the status of that own reading (see Sobrino, 1976:7-39) . The theoretical exposition by the theologians could be seen in a new light as people themselves engaged creatively in a new reading of Biblical passages.

Of course, any attempt to point out that their process comprised a 'hermeneutic circle' would inevitably be met with a blank stare of incomprehension by most. Nevertheless, the process of reading, discussion, interpretation and the new kinds of human relationships that began to emerge, the solidarity that began to be practiced, the growing confidence to think and to act without waiting for permission, and the ability to be in a constant process of suspicion about what was being presented, was indeed such a hermeneutic process.

However, this methodology of reflection was not the only way that Liberation Theology contributed to the process of resistance to the Regime of Pinochet. It was more than a question of re-reading texts in a way that would lead to a re-reading of the contemporary social events. While not being merely a series of new themes for reflection this theology did, nevertheless, provide defining motifs which provided the contexts for the motivating language and imagery which became the feature of the discussions. A key motif, for example, was that of Exodus, the story of how a people escaped from slavery and how they were 'forged' together as a people on the journey through the wilderness towards a final victory as they entered the promised land. Other key motifs were 'oppression' and 'poverty' and especially 'death' and 'resurrection'.

It is obvious that in a context where people had experienced the violence of the military coup, the events of *Estadio Nacional*, where many had been imprisoned and then murdered, as well as in a context where the question of the *detenidos-desaparecidos* was a constant reminder of clear and present danger, that death was a motif always close to forefront of concerns. Fear of death, fear of violence was a tool of control and was itself a form of social death. Death was not a comfortable companion even in that nominally 'Catholic' country. Indeed, as we saw in the example of the events of the *cancha de los ejecutados*, death was not only to be feared in terms of one's own extinction but also in the fact the dead do not necessarily rest in some peaceful heaven. On the contrary, in popular belief, the dead can be extremely active with the powers to cause harm or to grant favours. This was especially so if the death had been violent.

To take the death of Jesus as a liberating motif was difficult within this cultural concept. While people could identify with the suffering and death of Jesus on the cross as a metaphor for their own daily suffering, a more complex, historical, political dimension was more often lacking. There was also, within these cultural concepts, an element of fatalism where the events of life were seen as already decided by God. In this sense it was no small step to accept the injustice wreaked by the authorities as, in any case, being no more than the will of God. However, it took Liberation Theology some time to appreciate that these popular beliefs were themselves forms of resistance to the dominant religion that had supplanted the traditional religious beliefs and were also ways for marginalised people to impute meaning to their suffering on their own terms rather than those of a foreign culture.

In *Lo Errazuriz*, the process of working with these alternate motifs of death were actually never faced systematically or directly, probably due to the rather negative perspective towards popular religiosity which I myself laboured under in the early years. Nevertheless, as time moved on, and the liberationist discourse became more common, it was possible to allow for the fact that different modes of belief were able to run concurrently even in the same person. In terms of the community leadership the hermeneutical reflection on the scriptures began to introduce other, more theological, more historical and political, concepts of death to the point where people were able to discuss the question of different kinds of death and the different meanings that they carried. In this sense there were moments when the *animitas* would

be respected, with the concepts and images which surrounded them (indeed the liturgy on the field of the executed owed as much to these images as the more liberationist ones), while at other moments, when in the presence of overt, political violence and death, a different mode of thought came into play. For some this was an uneasy alliance but I would argue that it merely shows the flexibility of culture rather than a more rigid monocular view of its determining qualities.

In considering the biography of Jesus during the Bible studies, his death became understood by the community as being the consequence of his attempt to challenge the social injustices of his time. There was little in the group discussions that reflected the more abstract theologies of redemption related to personal holiness and ultimate entrance into heaven. One's own redemption was wrought not by leading a good life but by placing oneself at risk of death.

This notion of danger became intertwined with another important motif intimately related to death, that of martyrdom.

This motif was actually taken up by those other groups in the community whose 'Bible study' process was more spasmodic, often related to sacramental events or to particular liturgical seasons. These groups were, of course lead by those whose formation was much more methodical and practiced.

There was, for example, a particular series of reflections of which *El Martírio*, martyrdom, was a key theme.

A whole meeting would be dedicated to introducing this motif, the objective of which, stated at the onset, was: "To study the fact that the Church is persecuted when it preaches the truth of the Gospel and places itself at the side of the poor". A martyr is the one "*que derrama su sangre*" who spills his/her blood, for the sake of the Gospel. The booklet, which each participant would have been given, went on to state: "Martyrdom is a distinctive note of the authenticity of the Church. If the Church is persecuted for defending the poor, this is a sign that it is fulfilling its mission which Christ left it".

Already, in this short introduction key images and phrases have emerged which will occur time and again in the community discourse - the risk of **martyrdom** is to be embraced by the true Christian (although at the early stage this is caught up in terms of the Church being the victim, it should be understood that other reflections would have already dealt with the theme of the Church as being the people themselves and not a separate entity), **the spilling of blood** is a consequence (this theme was a key image in the liturgy at the site of the unknown martyrs at *Lo Errazuriz*, whose 'spilt blood had made that place holy'). However, the important idea being presented for discussion was that of persecution being a necessary confirmation of the Church doing its job. Persecution then is not a reason to hide away and do nothing but rather a reaction that is provoked by those who are doing what they, in conscience and in justice, are obliged to do .

This notion was crucial in the development of an attitude and practice of resistance amongst that section of the poblacion who ideal of good community involvement was to "*vivir tranquilo*" to live quietly, and "*no molestar a nadie*", and not to annoy anyone. That a good Christian should do precisely the opposite came as a cultural shock to many.

However, the programme of considering *El Martírio* continued to develop its theme as the session moved on through the evening. There followed a prayer:

Reader:	"We go about with serious worries and concerns. . ."
All:	"but not despairing;
Reader:	"Persecuted. . .
All:	"but not abandoned";
Reader:	"knocked down. . ."
All:	"but not crushed".

The leader then would say: "Today we are going to read various texts of Mons. Romero which refer to martyrdom. After each reading we will look at some questions". There then would follow a series of readings from the words of the murdered archbishop of El Salvador amongst which would be phrases saying:

"A Church which does not suffer persecution but which is enjoying the privileges and the fruits of this earth, be afraid! this is not the true Church of Jesus Christ";

" I am happy, brothers and sisters, that our Church is persecuted, precisely for its preferential option for the poor and for trying to immerse itself in the interests of the poor and to say to the people, governments, rich and powerful, if you do not make yourselves poor, if you do not concern yourselves with the poverty of our people as they were your own family, you will not be able to save society";

"We have, thanks be to God, pages of martyrs not only in the history of the distant past, but also in this present time. There are priests, there are religious women, there are catechists, there are humble people from the countryside who have been killed, flayed, crushed, broken, persecuted for being faithful to that one God and Lord: Jesus Christ".

Amongst the questions considered by the assembled group were: "According to Mons. Romero, why is the Church persecuted" ? "What is the preferential option for the poor"? Were there martyrs only in the distant pass"? "Do we know of martyrs in our own time"?

The programme continued with discussion bringing in the question of the *detenidos-desaparecidos*, further readings from the Bible, discussions on how people cope with the inevitable persecution of speaking out and acting in accordance with the 'Gospels' and so on. It is important to note that the use of the Church as the figure of persecution did not serve the function of making the establishment an heroic figure but rather creating a context in which the individual could find the solidarity of the group (the church, the community) as a source of strength. The commitment being asked for was not that of isolated individuals but that of a movement, a team, an organisation. The individual salvation favoured by the established theologies was here being collectivized as a dynamic community.

Death, in the language of Liberation Theology, implied more than extinction. It became, in fact, an important exploratory metaphor for different kinds of death as 'anti-life', all that which destroyed not just physical existence but the very quality of human life. Resurrection likewise was such an exploratory metaphor going beyond the concept of life after death and laying emphasis on those actions, those ways of being that enhanced life. Theologically there is a shift from a view of a 'kingdom' postponed until after physical death to that of a quality of life here and now. Death can be defeated here and now insofar as people allow the values that inform the utopia of heaven to take root in their words and actions, their relationships and commitments, here and now.

It was in this kind of theology that the community was able to face its challenges and to feel empowered, emboldened not in an overly optimistic and unrealistic attitude, but where the dangers were recognised. Nevertheless, equally recognised were the seeds of resistance and struggle against those challenges, found in the practice of the solidarity being engendered in the community meetings, gatherings, liturgies, and practical projects.

What appears to me to have changed for the people over the years, at least in theological terms, was a sense of God no longer being an arbitrary figure who was more likely than not to bring down suffering (unless you could somehow negotiate with him, or use the dead, the saints, or *la virgen* to intervene on your behalf) but rather as one who stood by their side. This imagery is powerfully present in the whole notion of Liberation Theology. The idea that God is partial, that God is biased, not in favour of the rich and the powerful but rather in favour of the poor, is arguably THE key theme. When, on one occasion, it was asked in the CEB how, if they considered themselves poor, they could make "a preferential option for poor". The answer came back at once. "It is an option for ourselves". This seemingly narrow (and self-serving) answer in fact hides a deeper insight. For 'marginalised' people to opt for themselves is to stand as subjects in the world. It is an action where the dispossessed posses themselves. It is to move from the margins to the centre by choice, not by the gift of others.

Pinochet also claimed to have God on his side. His project, as he constantly reminded the Nation, was one designed to destroy 'atheist communism'. He sought the Church's blessing, he wanted the annual Solemn Te Deum, attended by the Chilean President, to sacrilize his rule. When instead it merely proved to be the Church's unenthusiastic repeating of tradition rather than the benediction he desired he turned to the more enthusiastic *Jotabeche* Pentecostal Church.

The Catholic Church had come a long way from its tradition of being the religious arm of the powerful. The Theology of Liberation had a tremendous impact on this consciousness that the Church, even when it did not always do it very well, was clear that it could no longer stand on the side of the powerful against the weak. There was a struggle between Gods taking place. The God

of Pinochet who stood with him, his armed forces (and by association the rich who supported them) and the God who was seen to be with the poor and the powerless. The first God had been taken for granted for too long, the second was being rediscovered in the theology active in the *poblaciones* and those sectors of the Church that had made an option for and with them.

It is here that we can identify the contribution which Liberation Theology was making in the development of resistance. Liberation was not seen from this perspective as only concerning the economic, social and political, although this lay at its heart. Nor was it focused, at a deeper level, in assuming conscious responsibility for humankinds destiny, though this also lay at its heart. What marks Liberation theology, and is its unique contribution, is the belief that true liberation is the recognition that only with 'Christ' on the side of humankind can the source of 'sin' which is the destruction of fellowship and the ultimate cause of injustice and oppression be transformed. It is an invitation for humankind to live for something beyond and larger than themselves. It presents an unlimited and universal vision of human possibility (Gutiérrez,1974: 36-37). The theologian and the believer, at this point, enter the arena of 'faith', and it is here the anthropologist must withdraw for this is not an area amenable to observation, not even by participant, observation. for whatever else the anthropological method can achieve, reading the human heart is not a part of it. Nevertheless, the fruits of such faith can indeed be observed and perhaps offer possibilities for future anthropological study.

Pinochet, however, was exposed by the powerlessness of the people from the *poblaciones* precisely because, with all the power at his disposal, he could not break their spirit. For they were clutching at a sense of power that would probably always remain a mystery to him.

The first important point about the CEB then is that, whatever else is involved, an explicit recognition is being made about the involvement of its members in cultural production. We have seen above Cohen's insistence that 'collectivities are . . .products of their individual members' (1994:133), whether or not we choose to emphasise this aspect. What we have in the CEB is a conscious recognition that this is the case, that this creative aspect of the members should not only be recognized and emphasised but also developed both in the internal structures of power relations and in the external task of acting upon the wider society. Sangren takes a similar position to Cohen

when, in his critique of Foucault, he says that 'it is Foucault's explicit disarticulation of power from subjectivity or agency that arguably most defines the novelty of his usage, and it is this element of his thinking that is most widely emulated by other scholars' (1995:5). He argues against Foucault's reifying and transcendental notion of power by insisting that it must be grounded in social agency of some kind, personal or collective. He goes on to argue:

> As Foucault frequently emphasizes, people, selves, the subjects *are* in part products of historically and locationally specific circumstances, cultures, discourses. However, denying agency - that is power - to actors, viewing people even at the level of their desires primarily as products and only trivially, if at all, as producers, is not only fatalistic, it significantly misrecognizes the realities of social life (Sangren, 1995:5).

The difference between a CEB and the Church organised along more traditional theological orthodoxy, lies precisely along this fault line - the first recognizes the agency of members the second, either not at all or only incidentally.

Of course, the second position, as both Cohen and Sangren argue, is indeed a misrecognition, because, like it or not, the people are more than mere spectators of a hierarchical theatre or passive listeners to a priestly monologue. This is not to say that:

> The self is autonomous - such a claim would be facile. Selves are acted upon, they *are* social. They are also cultural. But the self is not passive as a subject of society and of culture; it has agency, is active, proactive and creative (Cohen, 1994:115).

However, the liberation theologians have not 'invented' the agency of the subject as a new phenomenon for the members of the CEB. What they have done is to bring the recognition of this to the forefront of consciousness as a necessary pre-requisite of a liberationist, Basic Christian Community. There can be no doubt that the people of Latin America in general have shown great determination in the exercise of their 'active, proactive and creative' capacity including their religious belief. This has been especially true in 'popular religion', although much maligned and dismissed by earlier liberation theologians who have been accused of showing less than complete sensitivity to this question. From the earlier days of liberation theology, we come across statements like:

> The manifestations of popular religiosity - even if they sometimes show positive aspects - are, in the rapid evolution of society, the expression of alienated groups - that is, of groups that live in a depersonalized, conformist, and noncritical manner and do not make efforts to change society (see Cox, 1989:234).

The criticisms made against popular religion are that it is fatalistic and individualistic; that it seeks spurious solutions to genuine human dilemmas in substitute satisfaction; that it promotes a 'false universalism'- an interclass harmony gladly seized upon by those in power; and that it prevents people from integrating in the development of the wider society (ibid;). Bonino (1976:31-38) in an article that had wide impact on this subject warned against romanticising this Folk religion which he insisted exists within history and therefore in a context of class conflict and oppression (See Cox, 1989:234). It can be demonstrated that the fatalism inherent in popular religiosity has indeed been an obstacle to dealing with the social and political realities of life of oppressed people; it can be taken for granted that much of this belief can be seen, in a Marxist analysis, in terms of false consciousness. Indeed we can agree:

> that some sectors of society have a special interest in seeing the proletarian majority of a society believe in a certain fashion, and want to keep things that way. Having their eyes turned toward heaven keeps them from analyzing the squalor of their current condition. (Schreiter, 1986:133)

However, in this analysis there is once again the double danger of the homogenization of individuals into masses and the, not unrelated assumption, that they, unlike ourselves, have a low level of consciousness which needs to be raised. Perhaps it would be instructive to call Berger's Thirteenth Thesis to mind in which he says: 'It is in principle, impossible to 'raise the consciousness' of anyone, because all of us are stumbling around on the same level of consciousness - a pretty dim level' (Berger, 1976:13). The problem is the implication that the people do not understand their own situation and are in need of enlightenment. That 'they don't understand what is good for them', suggests Berger, is:

> The clue formula of all 'consciousness raising', of whatever ideological or political coloration - and 'we do understand' is the inevitable corollary. Put differently, the concept allocates different cognitive levels

> to 'them' and to 'us' - and it assigns to 'us' the task of raising 'them' to the higher level (ibid;p.13).

And yet the practice of popular religion has itself been a form of protest, a non-conformism with established rules and ritual, a refusal to cooperate with the official religion of colonial powers. Pierre Bastian puts it in these terms:

> The masses oppressed by colonization, then, neo-colonialism and imperialism, have created their own culture of silence, their own means of giving meaning to their lives and of liberating themselves in the very midst of their captivity. It is in this perspective that the religious factor takes on interest as the determining factor of the social practices of the dominated class (Bastian, 1980:356).

Not everyone has been persuaded by the view that popular religion can be of positive value in the task of liberation (see Segundo, 1979) and I would share a certain sympathy with this position. However, the important point is not that popular religion is an efficient method of liberation but rather that it is a way of resisting the imposition of meaning by the powerful 'other'. It might be quite useless in challenging the structures of power except by non-compliance but at least there is an important element of self-assertive, non-cooperation exercised by individuals (and hence the accusation of individualism aimed at popular religion) which has the merit of defending their capacity for agency in the construction of important parts of their world.

We can say, then, that the emphasis of liberation theology on 'community' and the inclusion of the members in the production of knowledge is, in part, the organisation of an already existent, cultural resistance to being told what to do and what to think. It is the channelling, through appealing and socially productive imaginative language, of a religiosity that has proved partly successful in its resistance to cultural imperialism at the level of meaning, towards a more explicit level of organisation capable of challenging the very structures of power from which it emanates.

The idea of 'community' held by the participants of the CEB was not a neat concept (Hastrup & Fog Olwig, 1994:3). Who exactly belonged to the Community and who did not was a frequent topic of conversation especially amongst those with 'tidy minds' who liked their boundaries clearly marked. Some held a kind of 'physical, legal or administrative' view (Cohen, 1985:14) of this self-ascribed community. From this perspective all Catholics in the area were members of the Community whether or not they were conscious of

the fact or even desired it. Their choice was to play their part or refuse to play it. It was therefore a moral choice. For the proponents of this idea 'community' was co-terminous with 'Catholic Church' (Banck, 1990:74). This way of looking at the CEB was common in many areas of the Chilean Church and often meant no more than a renaming of the orthodox Catholic Church structures so that what functioned as a parish today was the next day declared to be a 'community'. However, even in these cases there was often a slow but significant change in the level of responsibility assumed by the members as they adopted some of the more political language and practices of Liberation Theology, or at least a 'soft' version of it. Inevitably in these 'communities' the clergy, or sometimes female religious (or 'nuns' as they are often inaccurately called) played a central and defining role. This model of Church situates itself between Boff's third, liberal model of Church and his liberationist model. This 'in-between' model remains convenient for the orthodox Church insofar as it provides a new and dynamic pastoral strategy with a discourse against oppression and a call to organisation that can only renew certain parts of the Church while, at the same time, ensuring that it remains firmly in the hands of pastoral agents who are part of the system and indeed dependent upon it for their livelihoods.

This communitarian model of Church is seductive in the way it presents many of the attitudes to the challenges of solidarity in the face of poverty. But as Boff warns:

> If it remains on the level of communitarian religious identity, the group tends to duplicate the services of society, establishing schools and health clinics or food banks. It is important to do these things when they do not exist. But this is not the only reason for the group's existence. The group exists within the world. It is not a miniature world where everyone participates, where everyone knows one another. It is part of a world open to conflicts, class struggles, exploitation, where religion is often used to calm the soul so that everything runs smoothly, the way things have always been done; it is part of a world where the powers on top exploit the suffering people below (Boff, 1986 135).

And this more focused political agenda was what not only separated one CEB from another but provided one of the elements of argument, discussion and dissent with them. In the CEB of Lo Errazuriz there was a large group who thrived on the communitarian aspects but who tended to drift away as the activities moved towards the more confrontational edges. A politically charged

liturgy was acceptable to this group insofar as it provided a discourse which justified their actions in challenging and dramatic terms. However, it was unlikely that they would be found participating in the kind of liturgies like the 'stations of the cross' that would end in confrontation with the authorities.

For others the understanding of *la Comunidad* as it was always referred to, was more nuanced. It was not simply a replacement of the local Church but an optional alternative to it. In this view the Community was more a kind of 'fellowship' - a set of relationships within the Church. The CEB was the vanguard of a new kind of Church which demanded a higher level of '*compromiso*', commitment, an important word in the community vocabulary which referred not only to commitment to membership but also to the ideals and aims of liberation from an oppression which was articulated in the kind of exponential process of development of ideas and action which I have described in the previous chapters.

Ultimately, the kind of community in which people imagined themselves to be involved (Anderson, 1983:15) revolved around three poles: Church, fellowship and politics. And it was in the measure that each of these variables were put to work that the particular shape of the Community took form at any given moment; but I believe that it would be pointless to take such a 'snap-shot' and define this as 'THE' Community. In any case it is questionable what value such a description would have other than to satisfy an ethnographer's desire for clearly defined spaces and places. But, alas, such spaces do not exist in and of themselves but are constructed culturally (Hastrup and Fog Olwig, 1995:10). So when we consider the CEB of Lo Errazuriz we need to take into account that the interplay of the variables in the construction of the Community existed, for the most part, in the minds of the participants (Cohen, 1985:14). What the Community really was will always remain ambiguous. As Cohen says:

> The mere existence of a plausible structure for the expression of a grievance or for the mobilisation of a mass following might be sufficient to persuade people with very different kinds of motivations to gather behind its banner. In other words, the explanation of collective behaviour is to be sought among its individual participants (Cohen, 1994:148).

And perhaps this statement confronts us with the paradox of the CEB. For while, on the one hand, it must inevitably be a construct of its individual

participants notwithstanding the 'official descriptions', on the other, the submergence of terms of individuality into those of community provides the individual with a sense of belonging and the possibility of entering into those webs where the flow of meanings are made.

To enter into the interplay of relationships inferred by the name community in the context of life in the *población*, in the context of the military dictatorship and in the context of becoming implicated in the dangerous politically critical tone of the CEB, does allow us to draw certain conclusions about the motives of the individual participants. Only the wilfully blind and deaf (and there were indeed some) would be unaware of the position to which they were exposing themselves in their membership of the *la Comunidad* and although their commitment might be found at ever-changing levels, mixed perhaps with unfathomable individual motives, the appeal of the collective was apparently persuasive enough that the personal risks and sacrifices were often more immediately obvious than specific individual benefits unless we understand the first to be indeed a quality of the second.

This compares with the disarticulation of society into the individualism by the 'sleight of hand' of seemingly collective descriptions like "*ciudadanos*" (citizens) "compatriots", "Chilenos", especially as used by Pinochet to differentiate 'true Chileans' from those *"señores politicos"* or *"los comunistas"* (referring to anyone who opposed the regime). These words were used in an attempt 'to eliminate collective identities, collective organization and collective action' (Garretón, 1989:273). In comparison words like "the masses", "the people" (*el pueblo*) especially as used by the left wing political parties, although still aggregating individuals into collectivities, nevertheless do so with the tenor of "power". If the individual is relegated to the group and the sense of individual agency lost on the one hand, then on the other a greater sense of power is promoted which not only empowers the group as a whole but also, by implication, the sense of self of the individual. So while the agency of the individual can be masked to both insider and outsider in a process of collectivization there is also a 'pay-off' for that same individual who feels emboldened, strengthened, less vulnerable in 'belonging'. The paradox of an apparent loss of self, becoming, in fact, a strengthening of it. Indeed we might say that Pinochet was fully aware of the subversive nature of the concept of ciudadano which he used with great oratorial effect. *La patria*, *la bandera*, the pride in the nation and the flag, have been the symbolic tools

put to use in previous struggles to free Latin America countries from domination. They are potent symbols for which people would lay down their lives and, as such, it was important for Pinochet to ensure that he had control of the current meaning of such evocative 'power words'.

'Community', as used within the concept of CEB at least, is a similar 'power' word. From the daily to-ing and fro-ing of the different groups meeting the myriad needs of a poor *población*, to the re-construction of religious myths through the medium of Jorge's sheet, to the final, solemn and silent dissolution of the congregation into the early morning darkness illuminated by candles and made fragrant with flowers, the members of *la Comunidad Eclesial de Base* constructed themselves as symbolically powerful, to themselves, to others in the *población*, and, importantly to the government. The ideology of the military regime designed to serve particular interests disguised as universal (Bourdieu, 1991:167) did not go unchallenged.

CHAPTER SEVEN

POPULAR EDUCATION

THE MEETING

As the meeting got under way the tension among the hundred or so participants was striking. It was 1984 and this was an overt, political meeting which meant that under the state of exception it was illegal. The nervousness and fear present at this event was a more concentrated version of the ever present thought at the back of the minds of most people (encouraged as a means of invisible control by the authorities) that the security services might burst in at any moment. Even I was aware how my attention was divided between what was being discussed and, at the same time, listening for the sound of approaching vehicles which would be the first sign that trouble was entering the *población*. As usual in this kind of situation the approach roads were under surveillance by groups of young *pobladores* acting as local security for the gathering; ready to give an early warning if the police or the military were spotted approaching the area.

News of the meeting had been passed on by word of mouth throughout the *población* during the preceding week . It was described as a *Reunión de la Comunidad* (a meeting of the CEB) but in fact this was merely a cover. Present at that meeting hosted by the CEB, were members of different social and political groups and individuals who belonged to no particular grouping: *pobladores* who were sufficiently politically aware to brave the threat that the meeting implied.

At that particular political conjuncture the popular protests, street demonstrations and barricades in the poorer areas of Santiago had been growing for some time as people, albeit, slowly, were beginning to gain confidence and overcome some of their fear. That particular meeting had in fact been requested by the Communist Party who wanted to bring in a speaker to encourage the people in their actions of protest. He was high up in the echelons of the party, a *pescado gordo*, a 'big man', (literally: a fat fish).

After the preliminary introductions he stood, rather an imposing figure, before the gathered assembly (the meeting was divided equally between women and men although there was a predominance of people under the age of twenty-five). For about half an hour the representative treated the meeting to an emotive speech about the need to struggle, to organize against the dictatorship, to create a "movement of the people" in order to establish a just society where people could be free from fear and oppression. He explained how his own party was struggling alongside the people and how it sought to replace the military government with a government "of the people".

It was an impressive performance, obviously well rehearsed and probably given word for word at many previous meetings in similar settings. However, the event did not proceed as normal.

Would anyone like to ask him any questions?

Don Domingo, hardship etched into face, stood up in his shabby, winter, woollen sweater which doubled as a coat against the August rain; a woollen *gorro* perched on his head served to heighten his *pinta* (appearance) of *poblador*.
"*A ver*", *Let's see*!"
He said in his small, disarming way.

"*You are telling us that Pinochet and the milicos (the military) should go and that you could run this country better than them. Well I think that I am speaking for everyone here when I say that we are in agreement with you. If you can do a better job than Pinochet then of course you should run the government*".
The *pescado gordo* looked pleased. Don Domingo continued:

"*In fact we would like you to do it now without any further delay. We have no work, our housing is poor and our children are hungry. So we would like you to take charge of things as soon as possible*".
The *pescado gordo* was obviously moved by Don Domingo's simple words and drew himself up to explain in terms that the poor *poblador* could understand.

"*This is precisely why I have come down here tonight, compañero. Pinochet is never going to simply give up his power, we have to take it from him. I am here to appeal to you, el pueblo (the people), to struggle, to organize, to come together and fight for a new Chile*".

Applause.

This should have been Don Domingo's cue to sit down but he continued on his feet.

"*So you are telling us that we must fight, take to the streets, defend the barricades; to form ourselves into a force capable of overthrowing la dictadura.*"

"*Exactly, compañero*". His message was getting across.

"*Then, señor, I have a question. It is obvious that you cannot take power unless we, the people, struggle*".

The *pescado gordo* nodded eagerly.

"*But if we are the ones who have to struggle, if we are the ones who have to fight, if we have to sacrifice the lives and security of our young people. If we are the ones so necessary for success, the ones who must risk everything to gain power from the milicos, then tell me, señor, why should we then hand that power to you? Are we good enough to fight but not to govern. Do you possess secret knowledge that we do not that enables you to govern and us to be governed? Because, señor, if you do then it is your duty to pass it on to us. If you do not then you should fight along side us at the barricades so that we can gain the power to govern ourselves, we, the pobladores, the poor people."*

Don Domingo sat down to general applause and the *pescado gordo* never managed to regain either his composure or domination of the assembly for the rest of the evening.

EDUCACION POPULAR

The significance of Don Domingo's interrogation of the '*pescado gordo*' should not be underestimated. This was the man, we should recall, whose house was supported by a pole; his own fate and that of his family placed firmly in the hands of *la Virgen*. Now we find a Domingo with a different voice; proactive, questioning, forthright, challenging and incisive. There is no doubt in my own mind, as I observed Domingo over the years, that this transformation can be explained not only by his participation within the evocative and provocative imagery of Liberation Theology and its practice in the *Comunidad de Base*, but also, and in no small measure, by his participation in the process of popular education.

The particular popular education project in which he had been involved had turned a quiet *poblador* who had always communicated fluently, although with the usual inevitable cliches of *poblacional* life, into an articulate and even more determined debater who was not going to avoid the difficult questions just because the speaker was a politician who shared his opposition to Pinochet. Indeed, it was a hallmark of that particular process of education not only to take a critical position towards those in power but also towards those who aspired to power, and showing little inclination to the obsequiousness towards the left wing parties so often found in grass roots education programmes.

In fact, despite propaganda to the contrary, popular education did not play an important part of the concerns of the major political parties during the rule of the Military in Chile. Indeed, I have heard it argued on more than one occasion by representatives of left wing parties that popular education was best left until after the dictatorship. It was better for now, they would say, to concentrate on the struggle to overthrow the military government. An argument to which Alvaro famously responded one day:

"*So you want the people to put themselves at risk fighting in the streets without needing to fully understanding the objectives of that fight. Sounds like the same 'cannon fodder' and the 'misma mierda' (same s**t) of all caudillos and caciques (chiefs)*".

It was this same irreverent logic which motivated Domingo at the meeting and which was to be the cause of conflict not only with the military, which would not be entirely unexpected of a process of popular education, but also with other groups and parties of opposition. The fact is that the experience of popular education which took place in *Lo Errazuriz* did not fit neatly into the usual models in vogue in Chile and in many other countries in Latin America.

Perhaps the events which occurred one day at the Catholic University of Chile will serve as an illustration of this particular education project and its wider implications.

THE UNIVERSITY

Considering that it was only nine o'clock in the morning the street outside the main entrance of the university was unusually busy. Anyone familiar with this daily scene would have been aware that things were not as they should have

been. In the first place the students, arriving for their early morning classes, were forced, unusually, to pass close scrutiny by security staff as they entered by the half closed, main doors. There also appeared to be a rather large number of people who did not look at all like middle class, students. On the contrary, they appeared to be ordinary 'working class' people, walking unhurriedly in twos and threes around the surrounding streets, apparently engaged in earnest conversation and as if *en route* to somewhere else. However, no matter what route they took it seemed to lead them inexorably to pass along the street outside the main doors of the University.

These strange movements of suspect characters did not go unnoticed by another group of unusual visitors that morning, because the university was also surrounded by the police; many in riot gear. However, perhaps unused to being called out so early in the morning, their attention was not as sharp as it might otherwise have been.

Then, unexpectedly, on the grass lawn to the side of the building, a hurried conversation took place between a small group of students and a group of *pobladores* and a message quickly passed down to the less-than-innocent passers-by. There was a series of hurried movements and, suddenly, the street emptied of the visitors from the *poblaciones* as, directed by students, they dived through the bushes and up to the peripheral wall. Within seconds everyone was over and inside the university grounds. The police seemed hardly to register what had just occurred.

The group now inside the grounds, guided by a handful of students, assembled at the large wrought iron gates which still separated the university building from the wider grounds in which they were situated. Through these locked gates could be seen the inner quadrangle where staff and students were going about their business blissfully unaware of the invasion that was taking place. A few people began to climb the high fence while others attempted to break the lock and chain which fastened the gate. Many pairs of hands rocked this metal barrier, putting ever more pressure upon the coupling. However, this proved stronger than the supporting posts because they began to move from the base, rocking to and fro until the inevitable happened and they began to fall as if in slow motion. A cheer went up at this unexpected, though highly symbolic, event as the large gates crashed to the

ground. The railings breached, the group surged through the nearby arches and into the quadrangle.

The University members could only look on at this invasion of their insularity. As the very centre of their University began to be occupied by such an unusual crowd, it was not too long before the balconies above and the cloisters below began to fill with the curious. The spectacle which met their eyes was more organized than they might have expected as a microphone and amplifier suddenly materialized in the centre of the quadrangle. Marco began to address the gathered and growing assembly even as some quick acting members of the teaching staff opened an electrical supply box and cut off the power. So Marco continued to shout his message, demanding to know of the students whether the walls which had been climbed, and the railings which had been cast down, were there to keep the people out or to keep knowledge in.

Juan Antonio took Marco's place explaining that the 'people of the *poblaciones*, the workers and the dispossessed' were calling '*una asamblea popular*' (a people's assembly) in that place to make known their grievance that so much knowledge and learning was locked within the Catholic University and away from the ordinary people, thus, failing its claim to universality on both counts. Who wanted to address the assembly?

Bernadita did. She invited the students to go into the *poblaciones* and to share what they were learning. The people are poor not stupid she told them. Who wanted to speak next?

And so the meeting continued with some of the students and staff showing interest in the proceedings, others showing indignation and some showing a special interest as they took photographs of the participants. Nobody needed to ask who they worked for and, surprisingly, nobody seemed to care.

So far the proceedings had lasted more than an hour and the confusion it had caused in the routines of the university seemed to be complete, and there was little evidence that classes were being conducted normally. But the word came that the police authorities, initially uneasy about entering a Pontifical University (especially when the Vatican was mediating at that very moment between Chile and Argentina on a territorial dispute), were going to enter and

remove the intruders. To facilitate this the staff and 'genuine' students were ordered to leave. This was a key moment which might have ended tragically except for the fact that a large group of students came forward and suggested that the *pobladores* leave in small numbers amongst groups of students. If the groups were large enough then the police would probably not realise who was who.

REPERCUSSIONS

And so it proved to be; no arrests were made. The invasion of the hallowed seat of learning was a great success, and indeed caused considerable problems for the authorities in the following weeks, as some of the students involved in the event were expelled. These went on a hunger strike in a protest which became another prominent feature of that political conjuncture. But that is a part of the story which will need to await for another occasion.

That evening *La Segunda*, the Santiago evening newspaper appeared with the headline 'Para realizar "Asamblea Popular': POBLADA SE TOMO CAMPUS DE LA UC', In order to hold a People's Assembly: CROWD TAKES OVER CAMPUS OF THE UC (Universidad Catolica) (Segunda, 1984).

The newspaper reported (p.3) that a group of between 60 and 70 persons violently entered the Campus Oriente of the Catholic University:

> The group was composed of individuals dressed in artesanal, with long hair, and with the appearance of *pobladores*. Apart from the 60 or 70 who actively participated, there were others who followed them more passively from a certain distance (ibid;p.3).

The following day the event still reverberated and the evening paper once again dedicated a half page report to the event. Quoting the student president they described the invaders as:

> A group of the left, critical of the political parties, which believes in the politics of assemblies where the people make the decisions, in order not to be run by the parties. The 'Poder Popular' criticises all the political groups as reformist. . . A history student defined them as anarchists and said that they were known as "Pop Power" and reaffirmed that their thinking was characterized by the rejection of leaders and the proposal of unity at the bases, without parties (Santiago,1984b:2).

The report was accompanied by a photograph of workers repairing the ill-fated gate and railings.

The shock of finding 'individuals dressed in artesanal, with long hair' who actually appear to be *pobaldores* entering the University, not to mention calling a public meeting, seemed too hard to bear not only for the government controlled newspaper but for the majority of the students and staff, as well as the representatives of the opposition parties within the university. On the following day La Segunda reported:

> The student centres in the hands of the opposition were annoyed by the declarations of the administrative head of the campus who said that the assembly "had been called various weeks ago by the students centres". They were annoyed because none of them supported the assembly (Segunda, 184b:2).

That the government should try to play down the importance of the event, not by ignoring it, but by showing that it was an act supported by nobody, was, of course, understandable. That the opposition parties felt obliged to do the same was an indication of the role of 'fly in everyone's ointment' that the organisers of the event had now become.

However, the students were right on one point, the *asamblea popular* had indeed been organised by *el Poder Popular*, a name by which they were widely known in the *poblaciones* but only at this point becoming visible in the wider, national, public arena. In point of fact the particular organisation referred to had never called itself Poder Popular (the P.P.), which is a widely used phrase of the Marxists and Trotskyists to denote grass-roots power. The group, which originally had called itself *El Consejo del Pueblo* (People's Council) (see Gadotti, 1992:175) simply allowed the Poder Popular label to stick.

The newspapers had already picked up on the existence of the P.P. some months previously in an article which appeared in the morning paper, La Tercera (1984:8), commenting upon the fact that the leaderships of the various political parties were rarely to be found visiting the *poblaciones*. The article suggested that this was for two reasons: first they saw no need to visit because they already knew "what these children need", and secondly,

because often the *pobaldores* did not admit the politicians except those from their own lines:

> One of these is *el Poder Popular* which you have probably never heard mentioned or think that it is only a Marxist slogan. This is a group of young Marxist-Leninists who faithfully follow the doctrines of Marx, Lenin and Engels. They read them and put them into practice. They do not have leaders but collegiate ruling bodies, they form quickly in order to turn to anarchy. They are against the CP (Communist Party) although many say that the CP is behind them. And many of them are in favour of destroying everything in order to construct something new. They are a powder-keg, and it would appear that the politicians prefer to ignore this side of things in *poblaciones* where they prefer not to go (Galleguillos, 1984:8).

PODER POPULAR

The events which took place in the quadrangle of the Catholic University of Chile, certainly moved the organisation known as Poder Popular into the centre of the political picture at that particular moment. Although already well known, if little understood, in most of the *poblaciones* in Santiago and other major cities, it had never been taken seriously on the national political scene. However, with the forced entry into the University an opportunity was created for the P.P. to demonstrate how it differed from the usual opposition groups, and how its views of popular education were quite distinct from the concepts and practices currently in operation in Chile. In particular it was an opportunity to demonstrate the belief of the P.P. that popular education should go beyond mere 'consciousness raising' which, they claimed, often limited the education process to that of becoming aware of the experience, existence, conditions and causes of oppression and exploitation. Popular education, for the P.P., however, was also about demanding access to all aspects of knowledge. And so we find an attempt being made to show that the division between 'consciousness raising' for the poor people and universal education for everyone else was an unsustainable position.

The calling of the *Asamblea Popular* within the hallowed, and, on that day, heavily defended halls of the University, demonstrated that the process of popular education can be, at one and the same time, a process not only of political consciousness raising but also one of political organisation. Popular education, whenever the political parties could be bothered to promote it in the first place, too often appeared as that part of the politization process

which merely preceded entry into the established parties. For the P.P., however, the coming together of people in a process of popular education was, at the same time, an explicit coming together at a level of political organisation.

This aspect of education and organisation being understood as one and the same process was arguably one of the main factors that made the P.P. distinguishable from other political movements and groupings of that time. Indeed, the events in the University that day, as its organisers explained to their audience in the quadrangle, were an attempt to demonstrate that people could organise from the 'grass-roots' without reliance on (or subservience to) the political classes and that agendas and concerns did not have to come from the top down. This is perhaps why the usual student opposition groups, disconcerted by the audacity of this action, distanced themselves from it publicly even to point of complaining to the government controlled press. The press, for their part, equally disconcerted by an event which fell outside the normal protest behaviour and rhetoric, felt obliged to spend space reporting on it even while trying to point out how little support it had. For an opposition act to gain so much press space demonstrates how confused all sides were by this act which did not fit into the normal rules of the opposition/government contest. And perhaps why it equally disturbed both.

Subsequent events escalated to the point where, for a period of a few weeks, the whole political debate was dominated by these actions. The Government, Church hierarchy, political parties, were all drawn into having to take a position with regards to the hunger strike of the group of expelled students whose offence had been to support a meeting of ordinary citizens demanding explanations about the exclusivity of the universities and the 'kidnapping' of knowledge.

However, it would be disingenuous to argue that Poder Popular was a spontaneous movement of the people for it most clearly was not. In fact the underlying theory was developed, in large measure, by a small group of activists and thinkers who had originally belonged to a faction of the Socialist Party of Allende and which believed at that time that only a revolution from the *base* could bring about true socialism.

After the military takeover, they worked clandestinely for this same end and in fact were amongst the first to promote the protests and the techniques and technology of street level resistance. From the beginning, however, what set this group apart was a belief that a popular power base was only possible with a people educated and capable of a critical attitude; popular education was seen as a means to this end. Education of this type was understood not simply as raising political awareness, but as developing the capability of thinking beyond the taking of power (which, though difficult, is not necessarily the most difficult part of the process) and to develop the knowledge and skills amongst the ordinary people for them to be able to exercise that power coherently afterwards. It is perhaps on this critical issue that liberation movements so often founder.

This is why it was always the practice of the P.P. to attempt to form an alliance between intellectuals, students and workers which they believed would be central in the development of a coherent revolutionary project. This would include the sharing of a wide knowledge base so that, at the crucial moment of victory, it would not be the usual *pescados gordos* of the political parties who would immediately take up the exercise of power 'on behalf' of the people. Hence Don Domingo's simple but eloquent taking apart of the 'big man'.

Surprisingly, within this process, the promotion of constant questioning and criticism began to have a crucial impact upon the self-understanding of the organisation itself, which led to an eventual abandonment of the idea of revolutionary overthrow and of Marxism as a useful philosophy. The newer project of the P.P. began to focus more upon what they saw as a contradiction between the level of organisation each individual brings at birth, phylogenetically informed, that is to say human capacity, and the social level of organization which receives the child at birth. This, the P.P. declared, 'is the nerve centre of the social problematic' (Poder, 1985:8). The capacity implied by being the highest form of evolution is not developed by the receiving society which, on the contrary, transmits its own deformities onto the child. The work of popular education, no longer separated from social organisation, became primarily about the rescue of adults from the failure to build on the 'talent' they have and to develop fully the human capacity to transcend the situation in which they find themselves:

> If society was organised in a more coherent way with human talent as our main preoccupation, it would be centred on the deepening of knowledge in every branch of learning and, furthermore, creating new ones with aims which are truly constructive. . .centred not on denying or combating scientific advance, but rather in making it more functional for human needs, promoting the marginalized sectors, reorientating the sectors who have access to information, and building, here and now, the organisation that will assure human formation, maturation and development (ibid; p.22).

This was the ideal exposition. Reality of course was much more cruel as the organisation was undermined and attacked equally, by both the government and the opposition parties. It appeared that in party politics it is a serious offence to attempt to make your own rules rather than play by the official ones.

The organisation was, for the most part, a minor player in the political arena, despite the occasions when it emerged into the larger political picture. More importantly for present purposes, it was as much an influence in the development of the political process in *Lo Errazuriz* as was the Theology of Liberation and the *Comunidad de Base*.

Poder Popular seemed to take great delight in pointing out that a critical consciousness seemed acceptable for many providing its criticism was focused upon military oppression or capitalist domination. The mischief played by them, however, was to direct that same criticism equally at the organisations of opposition in an attempt, or so they would claim, to make manifest the contradictions between their rhetoric and their practice or, even more seriously, between the rhetoric of seeking power for justice and liberation, and the so often hidden or taken-for-granted agendas about who would actually exercise that power.

However, it should not be assumed that the friction that existed between these organisations and the P.P. were the result only of philosophical difference. The truth is that even when Poder Popular was in its most Marxist, scientific and revolutionary period, it still managed to upset most other groups if only for its insistence upon the fact that organisation should be understood not only as applied TO the grass-roots but as something that emerged FROM the grass-roots. This was notably typified not only by organising popular assemblies of its own but also, and more annoyingly, by its habit of attending

other group's meetings, swiftly turning them from the typical top-down monologues and forcing a debate. Clearly this antagonised many leaders as control of their meetings was effectively 'kidnapped' from under their very noses.

In its later re-emergence as a non-Marxist organisation, Poder Popular continued its promotion of popular assemblies but with even greater emphasis upon the question of education. This continued to antagonise the parties of the left who argued that the current political concerns should have been upon the question of the organisation of grass-roots support and promotion of the protest movement, and that the emphasis on questions about knowledge and the equations of power was an irrelevance and a distraction. Other groups involved in popular education felt equally aggrieved but more from the perspective that for the P.P., popular education and political organisation were seen as one and the same thing. Other popular education projects, by implication at least, saw the outcome of the process as a popular cooperation with, if not actual membership of, the left wing opposition parties.

The role of the P.P., certainly in Lo Errazuriz and in other *poblaciones*, was, in an important sense, to be a thorn in the flesh of an often complacent and 'pamphletary' opposition. For instance in November 1984 the Frente Popular Manuél Rodríguez (FPMR), an armed section of the Communist Party was still issuing manifestos which said:

> The FPMR has concluded that the only way to efficiently confront and bring down this regime is by making use of all forms of combat, including armed struggle. For precisely this reason, our Front has been constituted - to lead the people militarily in their struggle towards the final victory (see Arriagada, 1988:71).

I agree here with Arriagada in his criticism of this unrealistic position of the Communists when he says: 'This entire perception was nothing more than a delusion stimulated by a faulty theoretical interpretation of revolutionary experiences elsewhere' (1988:71-2).

In this kind of climate the insistence on the part of the P.P. to provoke debate rather than participate unquestioningly in this 'revolutionary' process was never going to endear it to the other organisations even though, in terms of

organising the protests, Poder Popular took a leading role, being amongst the first to massify the use of popular armaments of the type previously described. However, even this would probably have been forgiven if the debates had not implied such criticism of the ruling elites, both pro-government and opposition.

It was in this context that we can begin to understand the lack of enthusiasm from the student leaders in the University. After all, these were hardly likely to be happy at the criticism that while they espoused a discourse on the participation and liberation of the people, this did not go as far as to question their own privileged access to knowledge and culture in a University denied to the majority. Equally the leaders of the parties of opposition were none too pleased at having any initiative taken by anyone else, especially when it proved so successful. But they were especially indignant that the Catholic Church should be embarrassed by the fact that its own Pontifical University (its degrees awarded from the Vatican) had been used to make manifest the inequalities perpetuated by those who professed to have 'a preferential option for the poor'.

THE IMPORTANCE OF POPULAR EDUCATION

There is no commonly agreed-upon definition of popular education, although Marcy Fink suggests that in general, from a pedagogical perspective:

> - Popular education proposes a methodology for learning that is participatory and egalitarian, designed to eliminate the power component of the educators role.
>
> - Popular education strives to develop among targeted sectors a critical social awareness and understanding of how society functions. It is often combined with skills training in which two levels of knowledge are valued: (1)the traditions, abilities, and experiences of participants; and (2) the transmissions of new technical skill and information (Fink, 1992:174).

Here Fink brings out some of the important pedagogical aspects that popular education attempts to address especially the, only too often unquestioned, power relationship between the educator and those being educated. No matter how radical the education discourse, if the methodology it employs merely replicates the hierarchical power relationships, then the words become a mirage which mystify rather than liberate. For the educational theorist Paulo

Freire, the purpose of education is 'the practice of freedom' (Freire, 1973:1-84).

As Fink goes on to comment:

> By using democratic practices in the learning process, popular education provides a training ground for alternative, cooperative learning. Those styles of learning and working can be carried out over into community organisations, political parties, government institutions, and society as a whole, providing a vehicle for altering traditional social relations (1992:176).

Which might explain why too many political parties pay only lip service to the concept of popular education.

Ivan Illich similarly privileged the notion of 'the practice of freedom' with his notion of 'conviviality' which he described as 'individual freedom realized in personal interdependence and, as such, an intrinsic ethical value' (1975: 24). When this is relinquished to professional and political elites, which is the expectation of modern societies, then there are implications for how power is distributed. Formal schooling plays an important part in this process in the sense that it is here that children 'learn about the superior status and unquestioning authority of those who have more schooling than [they have] (Illich, 1974:98). Indeed, in the case of Poder Popular, the orientation of the process of popular education was very much a critique in action of this traditional role of education and there was an implicit recognition of Illich's view that:

> Everywhere the school system has the same structure, and everywhere its hidden curriculum has the same effect. Invariably, it shapes the consumer who values institutional commodities above non-professional ministration of a neighbour (Illich, 1976:77).

The second pedagogical component of Fink's definition is more problematic. Fink is correct in identifying the role of popular education in creating social awareness. But the simple 'contemplation' of society is not enough. The term 'concientisation', critical consciousness, has become a common means of describing the process through which people come to see the world as an 'object of. . .critical reflection' (Freire, 1985:107) which implies going beyond recognition to include participation in the process of actually giving shape to

it. This notion, of course, owes its pedigree to the Marxist idea of class-consciousness and 'true' (as opposed to 'false') consciousness.

For Freire learning always implies action and reflection as part of the same process:

> The act of knowing involves a dialectical movement which goes from action to reflection and from reflection upon action to new action. For the learner to know what he did not know before, he must engage in an authentic process of abstraction by means of which he can reflect on the action-object whole, or, more generally, on forms of orientation in the world. In this process of abstraction, situations representative of how the learner orients himself in the world are proposed to him as objects of his critique (Freire, 1974:31).

In this conscientisation perspective the objective of education is not merely the handing on of information (the "banking" method) but rather a process of 'problem-posing' (Freire, 1970:57-74). The purpose of this is that the learner might pass from a 'naive consciousness' to 'critical consciousness'. In Freire's method this critical thinking contrast with the naive in the sense that the latter:

> Sees historical time as a weight, a stratification of the acquisitions and experiences of the past, from which the present should emerge normalized and "well behaved". For the Naive thinker, the important thing is accommodation to this normalized "today" (Freire, 1970:81).

The critical thinker, in comparison, will see reality as something which is open for transformation. On this point Freire quotes Pierre Furter:

> The goal will no longer be to eliminate the risks of temporality by clutching to guaranteed space, but rather to temporalize space. . . The Universe is revealed to me not as space, imposing massive presence to which I can but adapt, but as scope, a domain which takes shape as I act upon it (Furter, 1966:26-27; Freire, 1970:81).

These remarks perhaps acquire more poignancy if we apply them to the analysis of the movement through space I have been mapping out in previous chapters.

However, although "action" - "reflection" are key components in Freire's approach it is still open to the criticism of emphasising the means for a 'mental' transformation but with less clear guide-lines concerning the actual actions for transforming reality in more concrete terms (Kilian, 1988:117). As

McGillicuddy comments: 'A mental process may be sufficient to eliminate alienating ideas; it is not sufficient to eliminate alienating realities' (1988:237). He goes on to argue that for this to occur the conscientisation process really needs to be situated in a context where liberating practice is already taking place or at least where this could be developed, for example, in a local food purchasing co-operative. It is in this more practical orientation that we might more properly speak of 'popular education' rather than 'conscientisation'. Although the former contains the important elements of the latter it attempts to ground them in social and perhaps more political action (ibid;).

There is little advantage to be gained from making too many distinctions between the common terms: 'conscientisation', 'popular education', 'community education', 'people's education', providing that the basic frame of reference is that of people as 'thinkers-and-actors' (McKay and Romm, 1992:156; Dabezies, 1992:132-4).

The important distinction comes in the actual practice which separates those who have a convincing discourse in an intellectual sense but whose concrete practice is less impressive. This distinction has greater implications than a mere separation of 'talkers' from 'doers'. As Mannheim wrote (actually referring to the sociologist):

> When we enter the realm of politics, in which everything is in process of becoming and where the collective element in us, as knowing subjects, helps to shape the process of becoming, where thought is not contemplation from the point of view of a spectator, but rather the active participation and reshaping of the process itself, a new type of knowledge seems to emerge, namely, that in which decision and stand-point are inseparably bound up together. In these realms, there is no such thing as a purely theoretical outlook on the part of the observer (1940:152).

Poder Popular was not slow in pointing out the weakness of an over-emphasis on 'mental transformation' over and above 'concrete transformation'. More specifically, its criticism was often aimed at a certain practice of popular education, where there was a development of critical awareness in the participants as they became more aware of the ideologized formation of reality but where, at that crucial moment, the political parties presented themselves as the appropriate level of organization capable of actually bringing about the concrete transformations. With the result, reflected

in the dialogue between Don Domingo and the *Pescado Gordo*, that new power relations are set in place which define the 'newly conscientised' simply as followers.

Ximena Valdes in her examination of the experience of popular education of women in Chile notes that, as the political space in Chile began to be forced open following the plebiscite about Pinochet's permanence in power of 1988, that same space began to be absorbed by the parties. As a result the women tended to 'occupy their historical place (beside the youth, the aged, and the indigenous people) at the bottom of each political parties program' (Valdes, 1992:298). She goes on to say:

> Politics then tends to define itself as the task of specialists. It can be foreseen that in this period of democratization women's mobilization may become invisible next to the mobilization of the political parties. Moreover, it might disappear or become mute if the parties are not capable of incorporating women into their change proposals (1992:299).

ESCUELA POPULAR

In Lo Errazuriz itself the importance of Poder Popular was an evolving process. Initially, although there were one or two activists already living locally and indeed, in one case actually participating in the CEB, there was no attempt on their part to engage in political activity in the area. This was mostly due to the fact that more exciting things were happening in other *poblaciones* in the late seventies and early eighties. However, with the growing politicisation process of the CEB in the *poblacion* becoming more apparent it was decided, I was later informed, to approach me in order to investigate the possibilities of entering into the activities that were developing.

The subsequent meeting between myself and one of the local activists left me so impressed with the depth of analysis and critical grasp of current political events that I invited him to meet other members of the CEB. And so began the relationship which led to a significant input from the P.P. into the direction of the political movement in the *población*. That this would eventually lead to conflict between the Catholic Church hierarchy and the P.P. workers, resulting in an eventual split in the community, was both sad and yet inevitable given the emphasis on self-reflective criticism that showed no

respect for privilege, rank or arguments from tradition. However, this conflict was for the, as yet, distant future and, indeed, after I had left Chile.

The main vehicle of activity of Poder Popular was in the organisation of the *Escuela Popular* (Popular School) which was one of their main features in all of the *poblaciones* where the P.P. had a presence (which was most *poblaciones* in Santiago as well as in other cities around the country).

The process of the *Escuela* was simple. At various times during the week, about 100-150 children in the *población* would be gathered in groups, according to ages. Each group would probably number no more than10 and would be led by two or three *monitores* aged between 15 and 25 years of age. They would meet in houses, in rooms belonging to the CEB, and even under the trees. On other occasions the *monitores* would meet for their own formation programme given by more experienced members and by some university students.

Through the children contact was made with the parents who would be invited to co-operate in the actual running of the *escuela popular* or even organize themselves into small groups where they would participate in an education project of their own. This might sometimes start with a literacy programme or, more commonly, with practical projects aimed at responding to social problems and in particular those about health issues.

There were other, similar kinds of experiments in popular education which were aimed at children while simultaneously training young people as *monitores*. The largest of these was the *Proyecto Talleres De Aprendizaje* (learning workshops project) organised by PIIE (*Programa Interdisciplinario de Investigaciones en Educación*). Funded by outside development agencies, it was able to provide sophisticated publications and workbooks as well as professional (salaried) support from the central organisation (PIIE).

This approach was based on the accepted orthodoxy of popular education. Its principle criteria being:

> *La base que da contenido a la educación popular es la vida del pueblo*. . .(The base which gives content to popular education is the life of the people)

El punto de partida del proceso educativo es la realidad popular. (The starting point of the educative process is 'popular' reality)

La educación es el fruto de la relación permanente entre la teoria y la practica. . .Education is the fruit of the permanent relationship between theory and practice)

La educación es un proceso que se da junto con otros y para otros. . .(Education is a process given together with others and for others) (Nájera, 1986:16-17).

That the actual experience of the people should be the starting point for an educative process is of course essential for a process of education which is going to be 'liberating'. And a clear distinction was made in this project, as in most others, between the vertical structures of education where the 'people are seen as passive objects of the action of the educator' (García-Huidobro, 1986:60).

The formal educational structures, even if this is not their intention, nevertheless serve to maintain the oppressive society. The absence of critical dialogue is crucial:

> Education without dialogue considers the people as an empty bowl, passive and absolutely ignorant, who should be filled, giving them and handing over to them that which they do not know: Acting in this way, this educational posture:
>
> - reduces the dynamic aspect of education, to the action of 'giving' (handing over) a content which stays the same through the whole process;
>
> - does not recognize the confrontation between humankind and the world, the experience of life as the true fountain of knowledge and learning;
>
> - considers the person as a passive object and denies his or her character as active subject capable of critically inserting themselves in the world as transformer of reality (García-Huidobro, 1986:61; Translation mine).

The criticism levelled by Poder Popular was that this speaks only of structure and not content except to say that this content is to be 'found in life, in the daily experience of the people'. Unfortunately this criterion did not seem to apply to the theorists who fund and organise such projects many of whom

were professionals with higher education, who had expert knowledge gained from the kind of education which they criticised as oppressive for ordinary people.

It was at this crucial juncture that the kind of education project which took place in Lo Errazuriz (and other *poblaciones*) differed markedly from the more orthodox line followed by PIIE and the 'Talleres de Aprendizaje'. These experiences were valuable in recognizing that education has a political dimension with implications about power and the fact that education must be transformative of the unjust social organisation of knowledge and power. Nevertheless, why knowledge for the people should be so intrinsically different from that found within the 'vertical system' was not addressed.

The P.P. (Poder Popular) project was highly critical of what it considered the romantic view that "the masses know best":

> The inadequate opportunism goes to such extremes that some "theoreticians" think that these impoverished masses. . .know better than anyone what is necessary for their liberation, that the intellectuals should limit themselves only to discovering what is good at the 'grass-roots' and then massifying this as a valid experience (Poder, 1985:9).

This criticism was aimed more at certain Marxist views of popular education (see Fanon, 1966) rather than the "softer" version we find in the PIIE type of project who, at least implicitly, allowed for the participation of professionals in the education project. However, an important difference between the P.P. project and others was the insistence of using university-educated people specifically charged with the task of passing on their knowledge to people who were otherwise excluded.

THE PROJECT

The actual educational programme of Poder Popular was long and quite (some would say overly) complicated and deserves more space than is available here. However, it should be understood that it was human agency that was central in the underlying philosophy. As the P.P. explained in their own documents:

> Things (and above all human things) do not just happen. Something or someone makes them happen. And to produce them, this something or someone, which is the motive of what happens, does so with

> antecedents and with aims. . . This highest level in the situation, which is found in the present, is called the MOTIVE. The actual conditions which have been determined in the past, we call the ANTECEDENTS. The situation which will occur in the future (or the ends), we call the OBJECTIVES. The antecedents and the objectives always influence the present situation by means of the motive and in the concrete action of the motive (Poder, pp. 2-3).

It was in the relationship between what is known and what is a desired outcome that defined the agency of the individuals committed to bringing about the reality they proposed. As time moves on and the final objectives begin to be constructed in the short and medium term, so more antecedents become available as future proposals become past events and can thus be reflected upon in terms of the on-going experience of previous proposals and the more distant and longer term objectives (always stated in terms which are more general, idealistic, visionary). That they could be accused of the same romanticism as any utopian movement was dismissed at once by the P.P. Idealism, it was argued, was only an idea that has yet to be constructed in reality. When someone takes responsibility to construct it then it ceases to be idealistic and becomes a project.

A P.P. activist, then, was someone who was to become a 'high level of motivation' by being the one who gathered together the widest level of knowledge in terms of antecedents and using this as a base from which to address and construct the objective. The greatest influence (motive) in any situation are those who have gathered the most information about the proposed direction.

It is in this context where popular education, understood as access to wide, universal knowledge, rather than the narrower politicized, *conscientización* programmes of some other popular education projects (more dedicated to complaining than proposing according to the P.P.), becomes crucial. While concientization, *per se*, might appear to be a clear concept in the literature, in practice, like any symbolic statement, it can be made to mean whatever its proponents want it to mean. It is clear that in the case of Liberation Theology this concept has been crucial in the development of a deeply contextualised, critical process applied both to society and and to orthodox religious belief and practice. Nevertheless, not all claims to represent a process of concientization prove to be so on closer analysis. Indeed this was precisely

the point of view taken by the P.P. (sometimes their criticism was acute and at other times, perhaps, more than a little unfair). Nonetheless, it was firmly held by the P.P. that it was debate that presented a powerful means of establishing who knows what in a context so that the way forward is led by knowledge rather than rhetoric. In this way, through debate. through the exchange of ideas, points of view, experiences, a context is established that provides the possibilities for new levels of organisation to emerge. Importantly, it is the 'habit' of debate which provides the onging possibility of a dialogue which not only "requires critical thinking [but which] is also capable of generating critical thinking" (Freire, 1968: 81). The corrolory of this 'unleashing' of critical thought implies that those who introduce it must also relinquish control over its direction. This means that the political parties, organisations, Liberation Theology, indeed any group, movement, proponents of any theory or practice which gives priority to the growing understanding and praxis of the people in the struggle for their own liberation, must permit the focus of critical thinking to turn, at certain moments, upon themselves. In a process of true dialogue no one, nor any structure should escape transformation. Conscientization is a process of understanding, of practice, of growth, of development, of challenge. It is not an idol to be worshipped for its own sake. a shibboleth of those who claim the truth to themselves.

The practice of taking over other people's meetings, the P.P. claimed, was not intended to be an anarchical or negative approach, disruption for its own sake, but rather to demonstrate that the way forward was to have a deeper and wider understanding of the processes for dealing with the questions of power and direction of society than was normally permitted within narrow party political practice. This emphasis on engaging in dialogue reflects Illich's view when he says:

> If access to facts and use of tools constitute the two most obvious freedoms needed to provide educational opportunity, the ability to convoke peers to a meeting constitutes the one through which the learning by an individual is translated into political process- and political process, in turn, becomes conscious personal growth. Data and skills an individual might have acquired shape into exploratory, creative, open-ended and personal meaning only when they are used in dialectical encounter (1976:78).

In these interventions, the P.P. sought to demonstrate that political leadership was not a role allocated to those who have been around the longest or have

more control of the accepted handles of power, but rather something that should be based on the capacity of the individual to teach, to motivate, to promote coherent objectives. To be a leader was to be an educator not a demagogue. The project of Popular Education goes on to say:

> Human beings unlike the changes and process in the rest of nature, are also able to foresee the results of their own actions, therefore their aim is a conscious one and their actions are voluntary. . . The sense of proceeding in this way is to achieve the maximum results with a minimum of force. We can say that more than motive, the human being possesses the character of promoter, because he/she does not only motivate but also promotes objectives, around which he/she gives direction to the action (ibid; p.15).

Essentially, the P.P. movement did not actually propose a clear vision of a utopian kind. The emphasis was rather on the process of humanization. It was the development of the person and social relationships that in a sense were the main objectives:

> To share knowledge and understanding means, in principle, nothing more than to share the responsibility of the actions and their consequences. . . If we understand that to educate someone is to assume, together with him/her the responsibility for his/her future, it becomes easier to explain why so few people take on this task (ibid; p42).

This again reflects Illich's position when he says:

> A good educational system should have three purposes: it should provide all who want to learn with access to available resources at any time in their lives; empower all who want to share what they know to find those who want to learn it from them; and, finally, furnish all who want to present an issue to the public with the opportunity to make the challenge known (1976:78).

Whatever its ultimate view of the future there can be no doubt that the P.P. had an enormous vitalizing effect upon the direction of the political process in the *población*, especially among the young people. The emphasis on acquiring a high level of knowledge began to have an impact upon their view of themselves as agents. It was possible to see a large group of people who were beginning to become articulate, reflective and confident and if occasionally this manifested itself in an arrogance, I, nevertheless, remain

with the impression that the effects were positive and certainly helped to raise the general political culture of many people in the *población*.

POWER AND KNOWLEDGE

The events that day at the University should not, I believe, be understood as some kind of publicity stunt aimed at drawing attention to a particular point of view, or to thrust an otherwise not well known group into the spotlight. In fact the drama which unfolded can be seen as quite consistent with the philosophy of the P.P., an organisation which was hardly known for its reticence in proclaiming its point of view.

As the action unfolded we find the University, obviously tipped off that something was afoot, nervously attempting to go about its business. The heavy police cordon also indicated that the intelligence services had picked up information that was specific as to date, time and place, if vague about the actors involved. The very presence of the police was both a statement that they were 'in the know' and, therefore, in itself intended to be sufficient to deter 'delinquent' actions, and a statement that if anything did occur they would act, as they always did, to suppress it. On that day, around the University, deviance from accepted behaviour was not an option.

It was subsequently explained to me by the P.P. that even this overture to the main event was itself a huge success. One of the oft stated aims, and indeed part of its common mode of action, was "to make manifest what everyone else was trying to hide". In this case, as the students were filtered through half closed doors, tightly guarded by university staff on the inside and by agents of the state on the outside, the ordinary people were reduced to wandering about the streets, excluded from the inner sanctums and under constant surveillance. The statements about inclusion and exclusion did not need to be articulated in speech or the written word because they were articulated in the very distribution of bodies in space, in half-closed doors, railings, guards and police; statements made not in a narrow linguistic sense but through the patterns of order which surround all of us all the time (Hirst, 1985:73). Education might be the means by which an individual accesses a discourse but, as Foucault comments:

> We know very well, in its distribution, in what it permits and what it prevents, it follows the lines laid down by social differences, conflicts and struggles. Every educational system is a political means of

> maintaining or modifying the appropriation of discourses, with the knowledge and power they bring with them (Foucault, 1971:46).

At the Catholic University, without even entering into the actual content of a particular discourse, the implications were already becoming clear as the normal, taken-for-grantedness, of the system was beginning to be disclosed for all to see not only in the significance of passing through a 'narrow' door, but, more importantly, that the question of power is deeply implicated in the question of knowledge.

Of course, at this point, it would be tempting to appeal to well rehearsed cliches about the use of power to maintain in place the unjust structures of the *status quo* which ultimately benefit and keep in place an elite. However, the stated aims of Poder Popular were much more subtle than this insofar as the unique viewpoint of their education project emphasised the link between knowledge and power as one of mutual implication. As they never tired of explaining, for them information is merely data; it becomes knowledge only when it is organised in a coherent objective around which people themselves organise with the intention of bringing it to reality. This perhaps reflects the notion of Foucault who argues that power and knowledge must always be seen synoptically:

> Perhaps we should abandon the belief that power makes mad and that, by the same token, the renunciation of power is one of the conditions of knowledge. We should admit rather that power produces knowledge (and not simply by encouraging it because it serves power or applying it because it is useful); that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not pre-suppose and constitute at the same time power relations (Foucault, 1977:27).

Power and knowledge, in this sense, unite in a 'discursive formation' the procedures which regulate who is allowed to speak and who is not (Lindstrom, 1990:19) and which 'ensure the distribution of speaking subjects into different types of discourses and the appropriation of discourses to certain categories of subject' (Foucault, 1970). The task consists 'of not - of no longer - treating discourses as signs . . . but as practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak' (Foucault, 1972:49). Power then is not a commodity to be possessed but rather is 'employed and exercised through a net-like organisation' where individuals are 'not only its

inert or consenting target; they are also the elements of its articulation. In other words individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application' (Foucault, 1980:98).

The implication in this view of Foucault is that the effect of power should not be understood merely in terms of repression, as negative. Power becomes acceptable insofar as it is not simply a force that says no, 'but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms of knowledge, produces discourse' (Foucault, 1980:119).

The assault on the University was criticized not only by the Military Government, which was to be expected, and by the University and the Church, equally expected, but also by the opposition parties. And it is here that we see the full force of the P.P. action that day in daring to challenge the opposition orthodoxy that the question of power was simply one between the military and the rest, or between the capitalists and the workers. The effect of invading the University was to draw attention to the way knowledge was also used to construct realities of inclusion and exclusion not much different from Pinochet's regime. The difference being that long after Pinochet was gone, the discourse of exclusion and inclusion seen on that day would still continue insofar as knowledge becomes a means to construct and maintain 'orders of truth and power' within society (Lindstrom, 1990:12). 'Cultural order is political order; its economy of knowledge is an economy of power' (ibid;). That discourse which was the 'practice in which people reproduce relations of power (both subjugation and domination), at the same time as they sustain shared culture' (ibid; p.20) was being challenged at one of its very nerve centres - the University. This reproduction will continue, and the power relations that go with it, as long as people only speak and practice with what they know.

The crashing of the gates was a symbolic entrance into levels of discourse previously denied. The exclusions within such discourses that define which subjects can speak, and those that cannot, and in what ways they may speak and how they may not (Hirst, 1985:174), was being stood on its head. The people presented themselves in the place of learning as the previously excluded ones, those who listened on the outside and happily reproduced and participated in the operative images produced by the discourses. Now,

however, it was they who stood in the quadrangle and summoned the staff and students to debate, to open up the discourses to scrutiny.

Even at that point the men and women of 'learning' saw only an act of violence and still continued in their task of attempting to silence those who were not allowed a voice as they cut off the power to the speaker system. But on that day it was to no avail. The, so often, unheard voice continued to speak as they invited the students to go to the *poblaciones* and share their learning, to change the institutional conditions of power (ibid; p.174) by questioning who the subjects of knowledge might be in a refiguring of those conditions. Those whose task had been limited so much to reproduction could now be involved in the production of knowledge towards different ends. A case perhaps of the 'lunatics' taking over the asylum and participating in the definitions of madness, previously the sole function of the psychiatrist.

CONCLUSION

In the events at the University we have focused, yet again, upon a movement through the streets. As the evolving protest in the *población* was marked by the processions and marches which led inexorably to the barricade and then, in another moment, through and beyond, so now we find the theatre of activity taking place far from home, deep in 'enemy' territory. This particular political act was initiated by the movement of *pobladores* through the streets around the campus. And yet, in this familiar movement, a profound irony can be detected as the unfolding events present us with almost a mirror image of what we have come to expect.

In the *población*, for all their initial and necessary ambiguities, the processions and marches were intended to draw the attention of the bystanders. They were an invitation to participate. In contrast the movement through the streets around the Catholic University was designed specifically to be anonymous, precisely not to attract the attention of the bystander, especially those in uniform. There were no banners, no signs, no symbols. The only clues that something strange might be happening were to be found in the number of people, poorly dressed, unusual in those numbers, at that place, and at that time in the morning.

This reversal of images was merely a pointer to the succeeding events, for if the action in the *población* found its focus in the building and defence of the

barricade here the focus was precisely to breach the 'barricades' of others. The university officials, protected from the 'masses' by high metal fences, the police cordon and security guards at the doors, suspected that the University was under siege by a threatening and dangerous enemy. But unlike the barricades of the *población* these structures fell without a struggle as the *pobladores* poured into the very heart of the institution.

The apparatus of oppression designed to demand acquiescence, to intimidate, to silence, suddenly, if only briefly, found itself unable to impose its will. Even the rearguard action by the members of staff proved more pathetic than effective. But the greatest reversal of images is found once the barriers had been breached. For if the military celebrated the aftermath of their own rupture of the barricades with bullets, tear-gas, beatings, arrests and terror, the breach of the university precincts resulted in dialogue, reason, argument and invitation to co-operation.

Whether or not Poder Popular is considered to have ultimately helped or hindered the process of bringing an end to the military regime, I believe that they raised important issues that should, even now, caution against an overly optimistic view of the final (though unrevolutionary and ambiguous) victory over Pinochet. I would suggest that the most important of these was the insistence on not just limiting the question of power to that of structure or of force but rather linking it firmly to the question of knowledge, disclosing in the process some of the deeper ways that power operates. As Foucault comments:

> The real political task in a society such as ours is to criticize the working of Institutions which appear to be both neutral and independent; to criticize them in such a manner that the political violence which has always exercised itself obscurely through them will be unmasked, so that one can fight them (in Rabinow, 1984:171).

There is no doubt in my own mind that the P.P. project was very much a 'work in process', never quite achieving a fully worked out method. It was more a struggle in action, an articulation of new ideas in a political situation that still carried within it the old contradictions and suppositions, not least of which, those that promoted the illusion that some are meant to lead and others to be led. Many of the ideas expressed were imaginative attempts to

grapple with elusive concepts about the nature of power, of the subject and the place that knowledge plays in this process.

Whether this turned out to be a successful enterprise is probably less important than the fact that, for a short time at least, it broke the mould of political thought. While everyone else seemed solely pre-occupied with Pinochet and the military, the P.P. succeeded in widening the argument to include not just the question of who was in power but rather how power was at work in every sphere of human relations (Foucault, 1979:93-94).

The emphasis upon gaining access to the knowledge(s) locked behind the University walls was clearly more than a question of gaining access to technical knowledge or 'know how'. It would appear to have been much more concerned with engaging the disciplines which are precisely the levels of organisation of knowledge which produce the discursive formations that give shape and 'realness' to reality. The relationship of power and knowledge is not simply that the possession of knowledge creates the possibilities of power but rather in the production of all encompassing discourses which create the conditions under which, for example, statements come to be true or false (McHoul and Grace, 1995:29). What the P.P. attempted to provoke in the University quadrangle was to enter into dialogue with the disciplines, to suborn their discourse and, thus, to influence the way that discursive and power relations operate. To invite the students of the various disciplines to the *poblaciones* to teach was to open up new experiences for them, to give them an opportunity to recognize how their discourses were implicated in the formation of subjects (Foucault, 1979:70) and to engage with those who were previously excluded on the grounds that either they had no knowledge, or more insidiously, that they did not need much knowledge.

The relationship of power to knowledge was not understood by the P.P. in the Baconian sense of 'power over nature' or the naive realism of Marxism positing inevitable laws which constitute reality (and thus concientization is a becoming aware of these). For the Marxist left, as for the scientific positivist (as indeed for the traditional Catholic Church), 'knowing' (and thus consciousness) is ultimately a question of the 'discovery' or 'recognition' of an independently existent reality (McKay and Romm, 1992:68-103).

The P.P. project, although originally part of a realist paradigm, in fact, developed an alternative view of power/knowledge which sought the means for constructing new realities. When I challenged them on one occasion to describe the world to be thus created I was met with the reply that nobody could say, but they could tell me what kind of person was needed to build it.

Indeed this, it seems to me, was the central thrust of Poder Popular: to produce human agency especially amongst those who were too often seen only as providing 'muscle' or membership of the parties of the political classes.

Situating themselves firmly in the tradition of Freire and Illich they, nevertheless, built upon this to produce interesting and challenging insights and practices which attempted to move the question of popular education, understood as access to knowledge in the most universal sense, to a central, rather than peripheral, role. The success of this approach was that it enabled small groups of people to discover their potential not only for critical analysis but also for developing constructive ideas and creative alternatives to the options previously presented to them. (see Foucault in Sheridan, 1980:113).

Which is why we find Don Domingo no longer content, as we saw him in the beginning, to place his destiny in the hands of *La Virgen*, and not even content with leaving it in the hands of the *Pescado Gordo*. He appeared no longer dependent upon the caring whims of a deity, no longer dependent on the *largesse* of those who would rule, though 'wisely', on his behalf. He was no longer simply a 'foot-soldier' in the long march through life, but his own man, with his own vision and the confidence to argue his point with whoever presented themselves as 'chosen' or 'illuminated'. In the words of Poder Popular:

> When all human beings, accepting their social responsibility, have the freedom to express their ideas in search of a solution to their problems, and based on this have access to a clearer understanding through discussion, and thus are free to develop their creative capability, then we are in the presence of the people in power (Poder, 1984:53).

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

POINT OF CLOSURE

There are no real endings. We may stop from exhaustion, physical or intellectual. Quit because we are lost, or from fear of the unknown. We may decide that this is the moment to capture, in which to be secure. It is as if we say that all that went before has led to this. Yet in multi-vocal worlds of many motives, immeasurable imagination and infinite possibilities, the actions of this person or that disappear into vaster oceans of human histories. All endings are arbitrary. They are products of imagined contexts and a desire to fix meanings. There is a need within us to fit that concluding brick in place and to shut that final door. Cutting off or rounding off, for neatness or escape; endings are only acts of convenience.

Yet, unless we can declare a goal achieved, a hope accomplished, a mission concluded, we would drift in endless streams of words and actions, inventing worlds without form, pasts and futures bereft of a present. Perhaps an ending is just a step on a longer journey. Once taken it is done, each step closer to one future and further from another. Each step takes us from yesterday's goals, to today's vantage point, towards tomorrow's objectives.

THE END

Pinochet's rule finally came to an end with not so much a bang as with a whimper. The opposition ultimately failed to overthrow him and his regime, but by 1988 the political balance of power had, nevertheless, been remarkably transformed. Writing just before the final movement, the 1989 Plebiscite, Genaro Arriagada wrote:

> Certainly the Chilean opposition has failed in the sense that until now, and after fifteen years of a struggle that has attracted world attention, it has not been able to overthrow the Pinochet regime. But considered from a different perspective, the opposition has from the outset achieved remarkable success. This opposition in the broadest sense includes not only political parties but intellectual and artistic circles; the independent media, especially radio and magazines; the movements of workers, professionals and students; and moral forces such as the Catholic Church and the extensive network of lawyers defending human rights (1988: 172).

As the Plebiscite approached, the two opposing forces, according to Arriagada, had achieved equivalent degrees of power (ibid; p.173). Pinochet had succeeded in remaining in control but failed, despite the states of emergency and of siege, of imprisonment, terror and murder, in his attempt to destroy the opposition.

The mechanism of the plebiscite for a new President was labyrinthine in its complexity. It was based on the Constitution of 1980 which declared that the 'transition' to democracy would culminate in 1989 with the ratification by the citizenry of the sole candidate proposed by the Commanders-in-Chiefs of the armed forces and the police. That candidate was General Augusto Pinochet Ugarte. According to the rules if the candidate failed to achieve the required vote then there would be a subsequent election in which the opposition could also propose a candidate.

When the day of the plebiscite finally arrived and with the voting complete, there was an ominous delay in announcing the result. Then, just past midnight, it was announced on television that Pinochet had lost. The General, however, was not for giving up so easily and immediately called an emergency meeting of the Commanders-in-Chief at the presidential palace. But, in a move that appeared to pre-empt whatever manoeuvres were taking place behind those closed doors, General Matthei of the Air Force announced on the steps of the presidential palace that the 'No' vote had won. A few days later Pinochet 'graciously' told the people: 'Do not forget that in the history of the world there was a plebiscite in which Christ and Barabbas were being judged. And the people chose Barabbas' (Constable and Valenzuela, 1991: 296).

In December 1989 Patricio Aylwin was elected President easily beating Hernán Buchie, the official candidate, and in March 1990 he finally took office. After the inauguration Pinochet was pelted with tomatoes and eggs.

But he did not go away immediately. The Constitution of 1980 stipulated that the Commanders-in-Chief of the armed forces and the police were to remain in power until 1997. At the time of writing General Augusto Pinochet Ugarte still watches over Chile.

A KIND OF VICTORY

How wonderful it would be to have chronicled a more decisive victory on the part of the people who have populated this account. How marvellous to have written of the drama of the final victory of 'light over darkness', of the 'weak over the strong' of the 'righteous' over the 'wicked'. Human events are rarely so orderly.

It has been my argument throughout this work, that the movement from the procession to the 'field of the executed', to the struggle at the barricades, then beyond these to a wider political struggle, had been as much about victory over the danger of acquiescence to the dictatorship in the mind as to the power of the dictator in society. Indeed, as Manuel Garretón observed, the mobilization of the people in opposition to Pinochet was a crucial element in 'allowing people to overcome fear' while at the same time managing to make manifest 'the military's failure to dissolve collective identities and inhibit collective action' and, ultimately, the movement was able to 're-introduce political space for civil society' (1986:270). That this was to be followed by seven years of governments with hands tied by Pinochet's Constitution and the laws passed in his final months of office (Oppenheim, 1993: 209); that this was to produce a subsequent weariness in the people about politics in general (Waugh, 1992), are indications that much more time will have to elapse before a fuller picture emerges of the final effects of this period of military rule.

At the outset I claimed that this thesis was to be about beginnings. Don Domingo, (who has suffered much at this writer's hands as I 'kidnapped' him to represent my 'everyman') has appeared from time to time in his various *avatars* as one indelibly transformed by the whole process of the development of resistance to Pinochet. His journey from that house supported by a pole and a necessary faith in *la Virgen* to a man participating in a communal endeavour of learning, of action, of risks taken, of opportunities missed, of disappointments and victories, of fear and courage, would go unnoticed in the telling of the larger histories. The measure of his movement would not register in official accounts of the movement of 'masses' or the achievements of Parties, Commandos, Fronts and Alliances.

I would like to be able to say that the small movements made by Domingo were the first steps on an inevitable road to continued growth, to ever greater

participation and power. I could not say this, and the indications I have received point, rather, to a return to 'normality', a lessening of the struggle, a sense of resignation (Waugh, 1992: 20-30), as the market economy, with which we are all now too familiar, continues to use the poor and the ordinary working people as pawns on a 'board' once again not of their making (Diaz, 1993; Green, 1994). Domingo's victory over the *pescado gordo* proves to have been merely rhetorical because in the end the 'fat cats' are those who still have access to the levers of power.

Perhaps 1997 offers the possibility for President Frei (another Christian Democrat elected after Aylwin) to change expectations as the term of office of the senators designated by Pinochet comes to an end. Cathy Schneider in an optimistic note suggests that these measures might:

> Strengthen the government's ability to enact further reforms, eventually, perhaps making it expedient for political parties to mobilize the poor. Under these conditions, long dormant sentiments and identities may suddenly reawaken, and Chile will again be shaken by an apocalypse of popular rebellion (1995: 212-3).

I have some sympathy for these sentiments although they implicitly recognize that, in many important areas social, economic and political, the demise of the military regime has hardly brought the 'promised land' for the *pobladores* much closer. As I have said, there are no real endings only future developments, changed pathways, new hopes and expectations, continuing struggles in different forms and, perhaps, with different actors.

The real importance of the protests and the development of personal and collective agency lies, I submit, not in the achievement of any economic change in the lives of people, for their poverty continues mostly unabated. Neither does it lie in the vanquishing of fear, though a major feat given the regime of terror instituted by the military. The fear that disappeared with the withering of military rule was, after all, the creature of the regime, and thus there was only a return to normality with its passing. Nor is the importance of those times to be found in the gaining of new kinds of access to power, given that all we can observe in the aftermath is the replication of 'bourgeois democracy' and the economics of the market place. So where does it lie?

WHERE IT BEGAN

I suspect that it is not possible to finish writing an anthropological thesis without the writer regretting not knowing at the time of fieldwork, what he or she knew when the work was accomplished. This is even more acute, when, as in this thesis, the writer has had to rely so much on a retrospective ethnographic reconstruction. There is a question about what I might have done differently had I done more anthropology prior to going to Chile. If I had prepared the ground and done the fieldwork with more intentionality would I have arrived at some other point? Would my focus have been more acute, my questions more pointed?

In many ways things would have been different. I would have had more contemporaneous notes to guide me at the point of writing. I would probably have paid more attention in my notetaking to the lives of others in the *población*, especially those who took no part at all in any of the events I describe. They too were an important part of the story but appear in my writing as fleeting shadows. I would perhaps have concentrated much more upon the domestic lives of the people who inhabit this account, giving a fuller, a more fleshed out picture of their existence outwith the exigencies of the protests.

Yet the approach I have taken has yielded its own fruits. The very reason for my turn to anthropology in the first instance was purely pragmatic. I was simply searching for a means to better understand the complicated situation in which I found myself. At the time it was not my intention to develop my anthropological questioning into a project that I would carry with me after I finally left. Indeed, at the time, I could not conceive of any circumstances where I would leave Chile. As a result my participation, my observation, my questioning was more immediate, more contextual, less mediated through note taking which had a later project as part of their purpose. My participation was for its own sake. The disadvantages that this brings when attempting a more orthodox anthropological reconstruction were more than compensated for, I believe, by the intensity of the experience and the commitment that this engendered. My own position was primary, it was concerned with understanding what was happening in order to respond appropriately. I had no secondary motive to inform my participation.

The result, though less orthodox than might be usual was, I believe, amply compensated by another manner of 'being there' which has yielded different kinds of understanding and insights than might otherwise have been the case. Approaching the task as I have, I would contend, has probably been no worse for having been done the other way round than normal practice, and I suspect has probably been the better for it. Indeed the intensity of an experience mostly unmediated at the time, by social anthropological theory, has made its own demands on the anthropological imagination *post hoc* as I continued to pursue my sense making in a more theoretical mode.

This version of those events, written mostly from the perspective of one *población* amongst many, is replete with the images that impacted upon my mind as the months and years moved on. They resound like a litany and search in my imagination for a common anchor that might make some sense of them.

It began with Don Domingo's house, propped by its pole, sustained by his faith in that mother figure who would console, protect, nourish and give warmth. This image was the starting point and it is to Domingo (and all the Domingos) that I return. It would be a mistake to patronise as 'false consciousness' his dependence on *la Virgen* and then later feel free to rejoice in his 'development' to a point of which we might more readily approve. As Michael Gismondi argues:

> Culture should be conceived neither as a whole or shared of life, nor as separate mass and elite cultures, but as E.P. Thompson says, *as a whole way of conflicts*. Thus in examining cultural phenomena such as world views, attitudes norms, beliefs, spontaneous activities, or their organized expression in social practices, religion and art, the task of the scholar is to recognize the degree of meaning imposed from above or *generated from below* (Gismondi, 1988: 345).

Domingo does not live in a world apart but in a place where 'worlds' coincide. To attempt a 'history from below' (see Kaye, 1984) is not to be confused with a history of the bottom but is rather to listen to another perspective of the world that is too often articulated from only one point of view. To visit another's world is also to visit one's own, but at a different point. Here at least the anthropologist must give ear to a wider context in which he or she is implicated. The all embracing global economy, the transnational corporations

make mockery of an overly sentimental politics of local or national identity (Miyoshi, 1993). This is not to lose the wonder of cultural diversity but to situate it more clearly, perhaps less romantically, perhaps more painfully.

Domingo suffered poverty, in his body, in his mind. Faith for Domingo was a 'sigh of an oppressed creature'. It really was, I suspect, 'the heart of a heartless world'; and was, in many ways, 'an opium of the people' (Marx and Engels, 1957:37-8). But *la Virgen* was also a means to focus upon that suffering, an attempt 'to cope with it by placing it in a meaningful context, providing a mode of action through which it can be expressed, being expressed understood, and being understood, endured' (Geertz, 1973:105).

Whatever process Don Domingo engaged in later it was not despite his belief but because of it. Hope in the divinity, understood here in terms of a caring mother, should not be mistaken as an expectation of a miracle but rather as a means of nurturing strength. Poverty in this sense should not be confused with weakness. Poor people are often not as weak as some might think, they would not survive if they were. It should not pass unnoticed that it was amongst this sector of Chilean society that the first signs of the recomposition of civil society were detected. Indeed by the mid 1980's it is estimated that about twenty percent of the people in the *poblaciones* were involved in one form of social organisation or another. As Oppenheim comments, 'given the level of political repression and economic hardship under which poor people lived. . . they were surprisingly well organized at the grass roots level (1993: 184).

To listen to Domingo is not to put aside his theology but to attend to it with more acuity, or risk missing important elements of the contribution made by the *pobladores* in the defence of the democratic, political landscape during the worst years of military rule. His belief in the Virgin might have possessed an alienating capacity but we should also note the possibility for a liberating perspective. Candelaria suggests that:

> The fatalistic worldview contained in the popular Spanish saying, "Si Dios quiere" (If God wishes), can be an expression of resignation to one's lot in life. But it can also be a statement of courage enabling one to head into battle unafraid of death. Thus, flexibility is needed, as well as a keen sense for the ambiguity of popular religion (Candelaria, 1990: 138).

AMBIGUOUSLY SITUATED

It was this same aptitude for ambiguity that I described in the procession to the field of the dead and the ceremony which followed. After all, what is fatalism but to hope for the best while expecting the worst (or *vice versa*). The political question centres upon which will triumph and who decides. Fatalism, therefore, is not an acceptance of the way things are but a belief that power lies elsewhere. The objective is to find access to it, to by-pass its exigencies, to appropriate it for oneself. The whole point of popular religiosity is, after all, to get the divinity 'on side' in order to precisely change the way things are and in favour of the way things could be. The argument here, on one level at least, is that ultimately, power is in God's hands, the perspective of the Theology of Liberation on the other hand, is that God has placed it in ours. Both rebel against the actual conditions of existence. On the next level of analysis the question begins to emerge about whether the solution sought is individualistic or social.

Where we situate ourselves in the midst of these possibilities will determine the kind of 'space' that we co-habit. The advantage of ambiguity is that our situation need not be static. It in fact enables us to move around that space as we predicate identity upon "others" and on "selves" (Fernandez, 1986: 11). Of course as Levine points out people always 'have mixed feelings and confused opinions, and are subject to contradictory expectations and outcomes, in every sphere of existence' (1985: 8-9). The permanent state of non-communication that this could lead to is resolved in large measure, as Cohen suggests, by the imputation of differing meanings to symbols which are otherwise shared. 'Symbols are effective' he says 'because they are imprecise' (Cohen, 1985:21).

The Community cross which appropriated the images of national identity at one and the same time, was an intentional exploitation of this imprecision, a creative use of ambiguity. This allowed both for the construction of a certain kind of space and an indication of how people might wish to situate themselves within it. I have described how people distributed themselves variously along the spectrum of possible meanings and, indeed moved between the two poles as they saw the possibilities of moving towards the explicitness of conflict as courage grew, and the possibility to move to a safer

positioning as courage diminished and doubt increased. Even when some of the participants separated themselves for the more overt actions of combat, the ambiguous processions of political resistance were still able to continue. We saw this in events like the 'stations of the cross' which still incorporated the new combatants alongside *las beatas* ('the beatified' - a rather unkind, sexist and usually incorrect reference to some of the more pious women who seemed never to acknowledge any political aspect). Indeed they were events which seemed to affirm the different contributions being made in terms of resistance against Pinochet and were of enormous importance in maintaining the solidarity of the Community.

POLITICS OF MEMORY

The procession itself was an event with its own inner dynamic and was also an attempt to engage with those who looked on (and most would have looked on. All happenings in a *población* were scrutinised in great detail, if only as material for gossip). I have argued that the movement itself was already a contradiction of the claustrophobic political environment. The arrival at the field of the dead and its 'occupation' with alternative meanings gave added significance to that procession. There was a purpose to the action, a goal to be achieved.

I have described the event at the field as a re-writing of the topography of violence instituted by the military. The presence of the nameless bodies left lying on the field can be directly compared with those who had been arrested and disappeared in the ongoing military oppression. It was as if the curtains which hid those '*detenidos-desaparecidos*' had suddenly been drawn back revealing the awfulness of their fate. The mystery of the disappearances (at least of some) was briefly solved, only to disclose the disappearance of life and even the disappearance of name, of identity. They were not just killed but obliterated. Jennifer Schirmer comments:

> A national-security mentality assumes not only the right to decide who is to live and who is to die but also the citizen's ignorance of where and when they may be forced to die. The space, the timing, and disembodiment of death remains a state monopoly, hidden from the citizen (1994:191).

However, the disclosure of their destruction in time and space was offset by their anonymity although, in any case, they were to be 'disappeared' again

once their presence had served its purpose of terrorising the *pobladores*. And yet the anonymity of the dead was, in a sense, countered by the living presence of the Community who took it upon themselves not to let their memory remain in the possession of the Regime. This can be compared to the observation of Schirmer of the Women of the *Plaza de Mayo* in Argentina. These are the '*Madres*' (mothers) who even now still gather each Thursday at 3.30 pm in the main square of Buenos Aires. Circling the *Plaza* demanding the return of the 30,000 who were disappeared they each carry a picture of a husband, son or a daughter:

> The bodily presence firmly and consistently counters the disappearance of the body from public space. As a result, their refusal to "disappear" from the public eye was itself seen as a threat to the junta's attempt to empty the street (1994: 199).

I have suggested that the processions had a quality of 'now you see it - now you don't'. Schirmer reflects something similar occurring amongst '*las locas*' (the 'mad women') of the *Plaza de Mayo* in the fact that there is, as it were, an oscillation between 'absence' and 'presence' (ibid; p.197). Schirmer goes on to say that:

> The singular presence of *Madre*-and-*desaparecido* is a rearrangement of the subject who refuses to die, a subject who has been reembodied and now cannot be killed and, as such, doubly challenges the juntas "arranged absence" of the disappeared (ibid; p.198).

The ceremony at the field was a similar rearrangement of the subject, a re-embodiment of those murdered, unknown victims. Their silenced voices became incorporated into the songs of the Community, into the speech of Juan Carlos, into the shouts of *la Charro* as she invoked the memory of Allende. The religious imagery of the Christian belief in resurrection fed into the event. The intention, though still ambiguous, opened a scale of options for meanings, ranging from the mothers who were there for the first communion spectacle, to Charro who was there for its implications of incipient revolution.

The procession and the ceremony were precursors of the marches and the barricades which were to come. The streets became the 'spatial arena' within which groups moved 'slowly carving out an identity and a sense of political purpose. . .by their active use of public space' (ibid; p.201). In the absence of the right to vote the streets became the polling place; in the absence of

democracy the presence of bodies in public view became an indication of the existence of alternatives to the regime.

The activities in the streets were a metaphor for moving, not just through space, but also through time. Memories, dangerous memories, were reactivated. Bodies began to move along, not just synchronically but also diachronichally. Thus, in this sense as Boyarin suggests, 'we can call the body a "rubric" in which spatiality and temporality coexist indissolubly, in which their necessary unity is most clearly shown. When you die in time you dissolve in space' (1994:21).

Memory of the past and hope for the future can be assumed in all human affairs. Of course people remembered Allende, whether in positive or negative terms. What was going on in the streets of *Lo Errazuriz* and elsewhere, however, was to spatialize time. History was not moving on inexorably, marching under military orders away from Allende as the man of the past with Pinochet as the man of the future. Pinochet's 'passing over' the place of the executed defined it as a symbol of control. The death of the men was intended to be a reminder in the present and for the future of the payment for deeds of the past. Death occurs in time. Here it was also clearly spatialized. Commenting on the death of ancestors who died unjustly, Boyarin says that 'their death is, in a powerful sense, not "past", but subject to the meaning it is given through action in the present' (1994:11).

For Pinochet, in his process of forging a new national identity the deaths served as a marker of inclusion and exclusion. 'Groups that do not conform to that identity may be symbolically expelled in public rituals' as Boyarin puts it (ibid; p.18). Indeed the drama of the execution which the people witnessed was a kind of ritual repeated in many other places. But whereas rituals normally have as their objective the integration of their participants and observers (even by the expulsion of the deviant) this ritual had the clear objective of separating them. Describing the Argentinian experience, Carina Perelli says:

> The particular brand of Argentine culture of fear entailed the rupture of connectedness and its most immediate consequence: social fragmentation. Survival - or so people were led to think by the apparatus of terror put in place by the state - depended on people's ability to refrain from acting according to what in normal times would

> be considered their best inclinations. It entailed being able to abstain from reacting to ones environment; to curb the impulse to provide assistance and comfort to one's neighbours, co-workers, or fellow students; to forgo caring and sharing for the sake of staying alive (Perelli, 1994: 45).

The ritual of the massacre carried out with the rubrics of military precision was, on the day of the procession, being negated by another ritual: a ceremony of inclusion, of rescue, of solidarity, a raising of the dead. When it comes to symbolic action the ceremonies of religion are as powerful as any employed by the military and when given appropriate direction can be brought to bear with powerful impact, especially when this religion is the product of a changing theology in process of interpreting its own tradition within a new framework.

The ceremony at the field, I have suggested, was a precursor of the protests which followed. But in many ways, these more robust actions against the government were not too far removed from that first emergence of resistance. The circling of the site with the bodies of the processionists was a forerunner to the barricades which encircled the *población*. They were both a marking out of a territory upon which symbolic actions would be committed. The placing of flowers, the throwing of a bomb; the placards with words from the bible, the painting of the slogans on the wall; the burning of the tyres, the consecration of the earth; the disciplining of bodies in procession and marches end in an encounter with the 'enemy' present both symbolically and as physical might.

Shared memories of the past that haunted the present were confronted and interpreted anew. Whether as procession and ceremony or march and barricade, the people had at their disposal a repertoire of contention (Tilly, 1994: 247). Whether railing against God for the sufferings of poverty and appealing to the Virgin in God's place, or raging against the brutality of fear and oppression, the people had models for the creation of rituals of protest at their disposal. Whether taught by the theologian of liberation, or by the political educator, or simply by those who knew the importance of burning tyres to build a barricade, there was always the possibility to re-create the performances that were collective, political, interactive, cultural and historical: As Tilly suggests these are:

> *Collective* in belonging to whole populations rather than to single individuals,
> *political* in exercising power and engaging holders of concentrated power,
> *interactive* in linking claim makers with objects of claims
> *cultural* in resting on shared understandings, and,
> *historical* in accumulating and modifying incrementally from one performance to the next (Tilly, 1994: 247).

In these performances there is a coming together of the past and the future, the memory and the hope. The memory is experience of what is possible, what has been done, what has failed, and why it failed. But all this is information, it is knowledge which enables 'potential participants in collective action [to] estimate the likelihood that other potential participants will cooperate with sufficient effectiveness to accomplish their goals instead of defecting or acting ineffectually' (ibid; p.248).

Through the vignettes I have presented in this thesis I have tried to give a sense of the slow development of these performances and of their various actors who, from an existing cultural base, were able to invent new ways of challenging military might. The '*pescados gordos*', the fat cat politicians were perhaps too used to understanding the people as voters who would come out to fulfil their role when required. And so, in the new, non-democratic environment they were still tempted to view the people as 'muscle', votes they could call upon 'by other means', regardless of the cost.

Some have argued that the network of organisations that evolved from this period might yet have impact upon the future of democracy (Oppenheim, 1993: 183-189; Schneider, 1995: 212-3) and perhaps they might. But ultimately the people of the *poblaciones* are as disadvantaged, if less terrorised, under democratic regimes as they were under the dictatorship. Don Domingo's supportive pole is still needed for his survival and that of his family, his faith in the Virgin still a necessity for the construction of meanings. But his repertoire for dissent has grown, the culture of resistance more finely developed, his mind more acute, his knowledge more searching. Whatever else might happen in the future Domingo and so many others have grown. There might have been a return to democracy but for those people there can be no real going back because they were changed. Selves have become strong. Even less now must they be viewed as mechanical regurgitators 'of social doctrine and as the culture writ small' and we must surely be obliged to

search for 'the dynamic of society. . .among individuals as well as at the collective, institutional and structural levels' (Cohen, 1994:118).

BEING A CHILEAN

I agreed above with Tarrow's suggestion that 'the power of protest lies neither in its numbers, nor its level of violence, but in its threat to burst through the boundaries of the accepted limits of behaviour' (1989:7). It is this question that most haunted the minds not only of those who governed but also those who opposed them: How far would those actions go? Would they overflow with such passion and energy that the government might be swept away or would they be crushed with such violence that there would be a massacre of activists and bystanders alike?

The barricades, I have argued, were the focus of that boundary. On the one side the forces of 'chaos' on the other the forces of 'order' at least in the minds of the military and their supporters. Or, from another perspective: on the one side the forces of freedom and hope, on the other the forces of oppression and despair. While the barricades remained, encircling the *poblaciones*, appearing fleetingly in city streets, there was a kind of equilibrium. Each side living up to the expectations and prognosis of the other.

For the government, guided by the Doctrine of National Security, it was the identity of Chile itself which was at stake. They had appointed themselves as defenders of a particular kind of societal order, guardians of a nation under threat from internal subversion led by foreign influences. To oppose the government was to be a stooge of the Marxists and Communists', to be a 'Communist' was to be in the favour of 'foreign domination', which implied no longer being Chilean. 'The theme of anti-communism [was] part of the Pinochet regime and of the rhetoric of the Chief of State, where it. . . recurred like an endless monologue' (Arriagada, 1988:26). Exile was to send those people to where they truly belonged - outside. Assassination and murder of 'the nation's enemies' were more permanent versions of this same idea.

The mission of the military government from its inception was, in its own words, 'a patriotic commitment, to restore justice and Chilean identity' (Decreto, 1973). Trials during the early months were not held by the judiciary but by *Consejos de Guerra* (Councils of War). For this was a war against a

foreign enemy which was now within. In this context the barricades were indications that the 'enemy' was still active and 'occupying' Chilean territory. To destroy the barricades was to liberate them from 'these Communist elements'. It was to re-impose the regime's definition of Chilean identity.

It is significant that Pinochet took the step of decreeing that the *Cueca* should be the national dance. This dance which represents the courtship between a man and a woman (reflecting the imagery of the courtship of a 'cock' and a 'hen') is beautiful and graceful, with flowing movements depicting a mutual seduction between male and female. The man is firm, strong, insistent but respectful, the woman is coquettish, feigning weakness, leading the man on while avoiding his advances. It is a traditional dance found in other Andean countries, calling to mind the innocence of rural life, simple values, gentle people who worked hard and knew how to celebrate in a traditional way. This was ideal life, really Chilean, not political (associated with the more evil, darker of human 'nature') and, most of all, accepting of the ways things are 'in the 'natural order of things'.

The most moving demonstration of this dance was performed one day during a cultural action of dissent in a city centre theatre, in front of a large audience, by a woman of the organisation of the *Detenidos-Desaparecidos* (the Chilean equivalent of the *Madres* of the *Plaza de Mayo* in Argentina). She danced the *Cueca* alone. It was called a '*Cueca* for One'. The audience was mesmerised. The emotion was palpable as the woman danced the flowing movements around a husband who was no longer there. That dance became the site of a struggle for identity, a struggle about who defines what it is to be Chilean, and how it is defined and how it is not. The obvious message was that identity was not going to be defined by a military dictator who 'disappeared' the fathers, mothers, sons and daughters of the countries citizens.

The barricades then, were not just 'territorial' boundaries in the sense of a local identity, they were also an expression of an underlying motif expressing claims about national identity. Here the local became the representation of the national and thus the barricades were not only about the symbolic defence of the integrity of the *población*, but also of Chile as a nation. Hence the significance of the shouts often heard at demonstrations: "*Chi -Chi-Chi, le-le-le, Viva Chile*". Followed by: "*Chi-Chi-Chi, le-le-le, que se vaya Pinochet*" ("may Pinochet just go away").

I have suggested that the key to this motif was to be found in the cross of the *Comunidad Cristiana de Base* carried by *El Bigote* on those numerous processions. The blending of the emblem of the cross, the colours of the Chilean Flag, and the name of the CEB became a complex statement of identity, of resistance ' a national and not just a local statement'. Underneath the symbol of community, the rhetoric of revolution, of rebellion, of struggle, of liberation from oppression, was to be found a more basic theme of what it was to be Chilean.

However, this motif was one amongst many. The 'horizontal' imagery of procession and march culminating in ceremony and barricade, also needs to be understood in a 'vertical' sense. They were events with many levels of meaning and significance which were not static but constantly moving, blending, transforming. In one moment the dominant image might be territorial and thus there would be a struggle to liberate the *población*. In another moment it might be about identity, 'Chileness', where the emphasis would be placed upon the language of the creation of a new Chile. In this sense, the consciousness of boundary in the participants in all these events cannot be taken for granted as being the same (Cohen, 1994 :125).

In Chile, despite Pinochet's rhetoric of 'the foreign enemy within', the boundary was not one through which different cultures met and distinguished themselves but rather points at which differences within a culture struggled to impose/oppose their meanings. The boundedness in question was one of minds (ibid; p.125), exposing the reality that in this culture it is not possible for the anthropologist to construct the people as being the same. I agree with Cohen when he says that boundaries are zones for reflection: on who one is; on who others are (ibid; p.128). And so, if we come to 'recognize boundaries as matters of consciousness rather than of institutional dictation, we see them as being rather more amorphous and ambiguous. . .' (ibid; p.129). It is here that we encounter the challenge to recognize the voice of those often considered merely 'bit' players in a larger political drama. In this process I have hoped to give a sense of people engaging in a creative cultural enterprise, struggling to give meaning and to resist meanings given by others.

Pinochet's Chile required unquestioning citizens who needed to be disciplined into that role as a child is disciplined by a parent. It was done by fear, by

threat, and if the threat was sometimes carried out, this simply reinforced the point. However, the proponents of the regime were aware that, ultimately, acquiescence is best achieved not by the imposition of physical might but by the transformation, the control of meanings. The sign which greeted visitors at the airport: CHILE AVANZA EN ORDEN Y PAZ (Chile advances in order and peace), sums this up succinctly. The benefits of discipline and order would become self-evident. To obey, as in the line-of-command, is to become truly free. The demagoguery of politics where everyone can express an opinion becomes a recipe for confusion, a tower of Babel. Pablo Baraona, one of the architects of the regime's programme put it in these terms:

> The new democracy, imbued with true nationalism, will have to be *authoritarian*, in the sense that the rules needed for the system's stability cannot be subject to political processes, and that compliance with these measures can be *guaranteed* by our armed forces; *impersonal*, in the sense that the regulations apply equally to everyone; *libertarian* in the sense that subsidiarity is an essential for achieving the common good; *technified*, in the sense that political bodies should not decide technical issues but restrict themselves to evaluating results, leaving to technocracy the responsibility of using logical procedures for resolving problems or offering alternative solutions (Baraona, 1978:156).

The '*Fiestas Patrias*' (the celebration of national independence) was the representation of this Nation with its images of the military parades - the military as guardians of the nation, the *huasos* (the cowboys) in their multi coloured *ponchos*, and the *cueca*, representing the rural simplicity of Chileness, then in the *Te Deum* in the Cathedral where the President and his government would present themselves so that it all might be 'sacralized'. As Kapferer notes, 'Nationalism makes culture into an object and a thing of worship. Culture is made a servant of power (1988: 209). But as Cohen points out: 'If they are to draw individuals into their net, political managers must select symbols which have cultural resonance. . .' (1994: 163).

Pinochet's call to nationhood as a common attempt to fight the enemy of Communism did not, in the end, have such resonance. His attempt to construct a new kind of boundary consciousness where the enemy could be a neighbour as much as a foreign army at the gates of the citadel, failed as too many people refused to be so bounded. They railed against his boundaries, they constructed their own and showed the energy, the imagination and commitment to burst through both. The movement of people overflowing onto

the streets, defining their own limits of what they were prepared to accept from the regime, was a slow and painful movement but, in the end, it was enough to initiate a process which was to dislodge Pinochet from power.

BEYOND THE BARRICADE

Space is the measure of many things but especially of power and its concomitant judgement of human worth. This is why throughout the world we can compare the space allotted to those who live in overcrowded shanty towns, to those whose access to the levers of power are unencumbered by the trappings of poverty and who are able to indulge their promenades along wider pavements, and make their recreation in more ample gardens. We can see from the proximity of house to house, the numbers of citizens per square metre, how many live in how few rooms who is rich and who is poor, who is powerful and who is powerless, and, paradoxically given the vast numbers of the one compared with the other, who is visible and who is invisible, who is heard and who is ignored.

When those who are not in the centre of concerns begin to explore that space, when they move around it in a different manner, examine it for signs of the naming, shaping, dominating actions of others, then the first warning bells should ring for those whose might has, so far, been paramount. Power depends on the control of space. People must stay in their allotted portion and behave within it in the proscribed manner. Order depends upon it.

The poor are to live in *poblaciones*, the better off in *barrios*. Religion must stay in church (though military power can be unleashed upon the streets). Those whose politics are with the regime are true Chileans and so share the fruits, while those whose politics refuse to coincide are the enemy, foreigners and should be expelled to other spaces. As the armed forces discipline their personnel so must civilian bodies be disciplined to stay when told, to move when permission is given, to be allocated space in social life and move from it only with difficulty, risk and authorisation.

The procession, the movement from the house to the street, from the street to the barricade were all part of an exploration, the beginnings of an expansion of that space and, not least of all, of the way it was constructed in the mind. It was an investigation in movement, discussion, song and symbol. It was an experiment in how to gain knowledge, insight, consciousness of

how realities are constructed and then taken for granted. It was a questioning of why some live in poverty and others do not and how each is intimately linked in the production of the other.

When the barricade was crossed in that symbolic, violent movement; when the scene changed to the occupation of the space where 'universal' knowledge was encapsulated in so few minds, when bodies re-spaced themselves in 'im-proper' order, it was not so much a process of protest as the process of discovery of how universes might be transformed and worlds shaken. It is not surprising that the opposition parties were keen to shift the focus of the protests into negotiations between those who have always exercised power. Whatever political changes were to come it could not include any disorder in the correct placement of bodies in space. Only the manner of maintaining that order was up for discussion.

The lesson of the protest in the *población* is clear. Political struggle is intimately linked to the struggle for space not only about the rhetoric of its description. This is why sit-ins, occupations, walk-outs, demonstrations (digging tunnels and sitting in trees of more contemporary protest), cause so much angst when they are carried out well and why they beg so much opprobrium, ridicule and, when all else fails, oppression. Ideas can be ignored for a long time, bodies, unfortunately get in the way at once. But when the movement thorough physical space also coincides with the movement through mental space then a powerful, coherent force is unleashed. When the protests were confined within the self-made barricades of the protesters, Pinochet could still survive. When the protesters crossed the line then his survival was at risk. The real danger for him and his Regime (and any future government should be mindful of this) arose precisely at the point when the people finally went beyond the barricade.

APPENDIX

The Saucepan Protest

(5)

A Barricade is also made of people

(6)

The Community Cross - A local and a national statement

(7)

Anything can be used for a barricade

The Chilean flag at the remnants of a barricade

A religious rite - a political action

OBSERVACIONES ENVIO BULNES A LA JUNTA SOBRE LEY DE PARTIDOS PAG. 2

Segunda

Para realizar "Asamblea Popular"

POBLADA SE TOMO CAMPUS DE LA UC

◆ Repartieron panfletos, gritaron consignas y extendieron carteles. ◆ Carabineros "a la expectativa" hasta el cierre de esta edición. PAG.

MOB TAKES THE CAMPUS OF THE UC (Catholic University)

Headlines of the Santiago Evening Newspaper Wednesday 13th June 1984

Pobladores se tomaron el Campus Oriente de la Universidad Católica

Un grupo cercano a las 60 personas ingresó hoy violentamente al Campus Oriente de la Universidad Católica, ubicado en la Avenida Diagonal Oriente de la comuna de Ñuñoa. La turba entró, pasadas las 9 horas de hoy, por una reja metálica ubicada al costado izquierdo del Campus, en el estacionamiento de autos de los estudiantes. También clausuraron una de las entradas con gruesos tablones.

El grupo estaba compuesto por individuos vestidos con ropa artesanal, de largas cabelleras, y con apariencia de pobladores. Aparte de los 60 o 70 que participaron activamente, había otras personas que los seguían más pasivamente a cierta distancia.

CLASES SUSPENDIDAS

Los estudiantes, al cierre de esta edición, se disponían a evacuar el Campus, señalando que así se les había pedido porque ingresarían funcionarios de Carabineros. Las clases fueron suspendidas, según comentaron dirigentes estudiantiles.

La manifestación fue definida por uno de los participantes como una "asamblea popular". El acto había sido convocado por un grupo que convoca a la "revolución socialista" a través de panfletos distribuidos en las distintas universidades.

LETREROS

Según los propios manifestantes, entre ellos había "representantes" de Conchalí, Renca, Pudahuel, Maipú y La Legua.

El grupo se congregó en el patio central del Campus Oriente, gritando consignas y alzando carteles con leyendas como "Poder Popular de Renca", "Unidad del pueblo por las bases", "La Universidad es el estudio hecho conocimiento popular", "Contra la sociedad dividida en clases" y "Universidad de conocimiento por la base".

CARABINEROS

Al cierre de esta edición en las afueras del Campus se vivía un tenso ambiente. Dos micros llenas de carabineros se ubicaron en las cercanías del centro estudiantil. Paralelamente los organizadores de la llamada Asamblea Popular continuaban en el interior acompañados por los pobladores que ingresaron al Campus.

Según los estudiantes que abandonaban el Campus, la asamblea comenzó a las 11.

Una orden terminante del Vice Rector Mario Albornoz prohibió que entrara la prensa al local, incluso para fotografiar la reja que según algunas versiones habría sido derribada por los pobladores. Los únicos que podían ingresar eran los profesores y administrativos.

VERSIONES

En el patio externo que da a la calle J. Baile y Ordoñez, los estudiantes que no participaban en la asamblea y que fueron obligados a salir de las aulas, comentaban lo sucedido. Varios hicieron declaraciones, pero sin querer identificarse. Uno de ellos señaló: "Esto no es una toma, lo que ocurre es que las autoridades paralizaron las clases"; otro muchacho acotó: "Lo que se está haciendo en el interior es una simple asamblea popular, es decir una reunión donde el pueblo discute y toma decisiones".

Mónica, alumna de alemán, agregó: "Llegué como a las 10 porque tenía prueba y al entrar vi que las sillas estaban dispuestas como para una reunión. Había gente extraña hablando y gritando. Luego me hicieron salir por orden superior".

Oscar Marín, el jefe administrativo del Campus al ser consultado acerca de lo sucedido, indicó: "Hubo una invasión de gente extraña que entró saltando las rejas para intervenir en una asamblea citada hace varias semanas por los centros de alumnos. Incluso rompieron por atrás".

Consultado sobre quién llamó a la fuerza pública dijo que "habría llegado sola al saber de esta asamblea que estaba tan publicitada". Otras versiones señalaron que las autoridades de la Universidad habían solicitado con anticipación la fuerza pública, la que no llegó a tiempo.

Entretanto los jóvenes que iban saliendo portaban una proclama y una carta dirigida a los universitarios de Chile de Eugenio Velasco y fechada en abril de este año en Washington.

Uno de los panfletos repartidos contiene consignas como "Contra la explotación capitalista, revolución socialista" y "Cada trabajador un estudiante, cada estudiante un trabajador".

Pobaldores took the Eastern Campus of the Catholic University

The group gathered in the central patio of the Campus shouting slogans and holding placar which said things like: "The university is where study becomes knowledge for the people"

"What they are doing inside" said one interviewee "is holding a meeting where the people disc and take decisions"

Numerosos estudiantes se congregaron en las puertas del Campus, luego de ser suspendidas las clases debido a la manifestación que se desarrollaba en el interior.

A number of students congregate at the doors of the Campus as classes are suspended due to the demonstration which is taking place inside

Carabineros mantuvo vigilado el sector durante toda la mañana.

Carabinero keep the area under surveilance throughout the whole morning

Photographs:

1. Equipo Boletin,1987 Boletin Zona Oeste August: No. 169

2. Equipo Boletin,1987 Boletin Zona Oeste November: No. 172

3. Equipo Boletin,1987 Boletin Zona Oeste November: No. 172

6. Equipo Boletin,1987 Boletin Zona Oeste March: No. 164

Photographs:
4, 5, 7, 8, 9,
Carlos Tobar, Claudio Pérez, Gilberto Palacios, Oscar Navarro, Patricia Alfaro 1985 Le Chili La Démocratie Aujourd'hui! Editions Lousiville:Saint Martin

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